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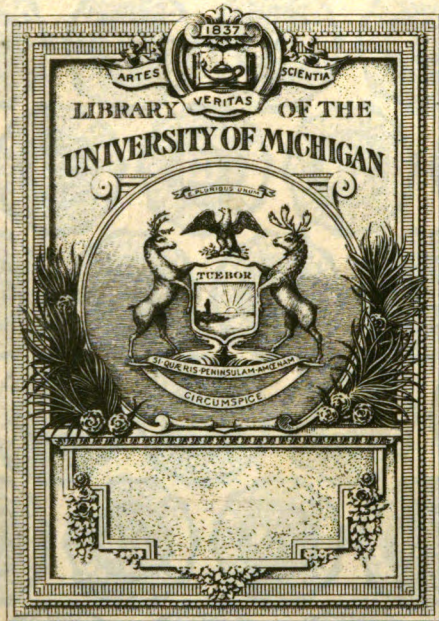
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THE COMEDY OF DANTE ALIG-
HIERI RENDERED INTO ENGLISH
BY SIR EDWARD SULLIVAN, BART.

89661

HELL.

"Vagliami il lungo studio e il grande amore
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INF. I. 83.

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ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED
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to

A. G. O'S.

PREFACE.



THE following rendering is an attempt to put Dante's immortal *Comedy* before English readers in a form which—allowing for differences of idiom—accurately represents the original, without entirely sacrificing the poetical spirit which is so marked a characteristic of the work.

The prose versions which have hitherto been published—though few in number—seem to have been framed rather as a help to students of the Italian text, than with a view to give the English reader any insight of a connected kind into Dante's Poem. I know of no prose rendering in our language which is throughout intelligible without the aid of the original text. The best of them by far—John Carlyle's *Inferno*—rises, no doubt, at times above the level of a "crib"; but, taken as a

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whole, it possesses, in common with the others, the fault to which I have referred.

Touching the many metrical versions with which we are familiar, I would only wish to say, that I am of those who think that no rendering of *The Comedy* into English verse can give even the most shadowy idea of the old Italian Poem. The "terza rima" of the original is impossible without its leading feature, the double ending; and the dissyllabic rhymes in our language are not sufficiently numerous for a serious work of so great a length. Byron, too, has shown us, in his *Don Juan*, that this particular form of ending is more adapted to the lines of a work of a lighter kind.

I have endeavoured, as far as possible, to couch my translation in the simple and solemn language with which all readers of our Bible have been long familiar. Its archaic style would appear, for obvious reasons, to be peculiarly appropriate to the rendering of such a work as Dante's masterpiece; for, while prose in form, it seems to suggest, rather than to repel, the introduction of expressions of a poetical character.

The text which I have used is that of the Italian edition of Eugenio Camerini, published by

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E. Sonzongno (Milan, 1888), which is, in the main, founded on that of Witte ; a few variations are, however, introduced by Camerini from the two editions of the Academicians Della Crusca.

I have not thought it necessary to add the usual explanatory notes, which are to be found in almost every translation.

I have adopted the title given by Dante himself to the Poem, calling it *The Comedy*, in preference to the name by which it came to be known in later times.

EDWARD SULLIVAN.

32, FITZWILLIAM PLACE,
DUBLIN, 1893.

HELL.

CANTO I.



MIDWAY on the journey of our life I found myself within a darksome wood, for the right way was lost. Ah me! how hard a thing it is to tell how wild and rough and unyielding was that wood, which even in remembering bringeth back my fear. So fraught with bitterness it is, that death is little more so. But that I may set down the good I found there, I will make mention of the other things that I discerned there.

I know not rightly how to tell the manner of my entrance; so filled was I with drowsiness just at the moment when I strayed from the true path. But after that I was come nigh unto the foot of a hill, there, where the valley ended, that had filled my heart with piercing terror, I looked above me, and beheld its shoulders already bathed in the rays of the planet that leadeth all men straight on every road. Then, in some measure, was set at rest the fear, that had kept abiding in the hollow of my heart throughout the night that I

had passed in such affliction. And as he, who with laboured breath hath escaped to shore from out the sea, turneth him to the perilous flood, and gazeth; even in such wise did my mind, that still was flying, turn back to look again upon the pass which never mortal yet hath left alive.

After that I had rested my weary frame, I took my way again along the lonely steep, in such wise that the firm-set foot was always lowest. And lo! even at the first rise of the slope, a leopard, light of limb and very agile, clad in a spotted hide: nor ever moved she from before my face, but barred my way so doggedly, that I had often turned me to go back.

The time was at the opening of the morning; and the sun was climbing up, attended by the stars that were beside him when Divine Love first waked to motion those things of loveliness; so that the bright skin of the beast, the hour, and the pleasant season, bade me to hope for good; yet not so, but that the sight of a lion, which met my gaze, made me to fear. He seemed to come against me with head raised high, and urged by ravening hunger; so that the air appeared to tremble at his presence. A she-wolf too, that in her leanness seemed filled full of craving—and many a people ere now hath she made to dwell in misery—she brought such hopelessness upon me with the terror of her aspect, that I despaired of making the ascent. And even as he whose heart is set on gain, when that the hour is come that

causeth him to lose, sorroweth in his inmost thoughts, and is ill at ease ; even to such plight that restless beast reduced me, that, coming against me, little by little drave me back to where the sun is silent.

Whilst I was hurrying to the place below, there loomed upon my sight one who seemed voiceless by reason of long silence. When I beheld him in the vasty wilderness, I cried unto him : “ Have pity on me, whatever thou mayest be—or spirit, or man in verity.”

And he made answer to me : “ I am no man, man have I been long since ; and Lombards were my parents, and, by their place of birth, Mantuans both. I saw the light first under Julius, late though it was ; and spent my days at Rome under the good Augustus, what time the false and fabulous gods held sway. A poet was I, and of the just son of Anchises was my song, who came from Troy after proud Ilium was laid waste in fire. But thou, why turnest thou again to such disquietude ? Why dost thou not ascend the delectable mountain, which is the cause and source of all delight ?”

“ Art thou then that Virgil, that fountain-head which poureth abroad so brimming a flood of eloquence ?” I answered him with looks abashed. “ Glory and light of other lords of song, may my hours of study, and the mighty love that made me search thy volume, stand me in need ! Thou art my master and the author

of my choosing: thou art he alone from whom I taught me the goodly style that hath brought honour to me. Behold the beast in fear of which I turned me back; rescue me from her, fame-favoured bard, for she setteth my veins and pulses trembling."

"Thou must needs take another road," he answered, when that he saw me weep, "if thou desirest to flee from this wild place: because this beast, by reason of which thou criest aloud, suffereth none to come her way, but hindereth so rudely, that she slayeth them. So baneful and accursed is her nature, that she can never glut her ravening greed; and after feeding she is hungrier than before. Many are the living things with which she mateth, and more there still must be, or ever the Greyhound come, that will cause her to die in agony. He will not eat of earth nor pelf, but of wisdom, love and worth; and his nation shall be between Feltro and Feltro. Of that low-lying Italy shall he the saviour be, in whose defence fell chaste Camilla, Euryalus and Turnus, and Nisus, wounded sore. Through every city shall he give chase to her, till he have driven her into Hell again, whence Envy first unloosed her. Wherefore in thy behoof I think and deem it well, that thou shouldst follow me; and I will be thy guide, and lead thee out from this place through the eternal realms, where thou shalt hear shriekings of despair, shalt see the ancient spirits in their sorrowing, so that each crieth

aloud for second death. Those too shalt thou behold who are at peace albeit in flames, because they hope to come, whensoever it be, amongst the blest: to whom then, if it so be that thou desirest to ascend, a spirit shall there be for that more worthy than I. In her charge will I leave thee when I am going from thee: for that Imperial monarch who holdeth sway above, for that I was rebellious to his law, willeth that none should come by aid of mine into his city. He ruleth everywhere, and there is he king, his dwelling-place is there, there is his lofty throne: O happy he, whom he chooseth to abide there!"

And I made answer to him: "Poet, I beg thee by that God whom thou didst never know, in order that I may flee from this and greater evil, lead me where thou just now hast said, so that I may behold the gate of St. Peter, and those whom thou dost represent in such sad state."

Then he passed onward, and I kept close behind him.

CANTO II.



THE day was waning, and the dusky air was loosing from their toils the living things that are on earth; and I, all lonely, was making me ready to brave the trials of the way and the struggle with compassion, which memory will retrace, that erreth not.

O Muses, O heaven-sent intellect, lend me now your aid! O Memory, that hast set down that which I saw, here will thy lordly power be manifest.

“Poet, that guidest me,” I began, “look thou to my strength, if that it may suffice, or ever thou dost entrust me to the deep defile. Thou it is that sayest, that Silvius’ sire, clothed albeit in decay, made his way even unto the realm of the immortals, and tarried there possessed of mortal understanding. And therefore if the Enemy of all evil in this was gracious, mindful of the mighty issue that should come forth from him, his personage, and his power; to man of intellect it seemeth not unmeet: for in the highest heaven he was ordained to be the father of all-glorious Rome and of her empire: both which, as I

would fain speak truth, were established for the holy place, where sitteth the inheritor of mighty Peter. By this same journey, for which thou givest him honour, he learned of things that proved to him the sources of his triumph, and of the mantle of the popes. Afterwards, went there thither the Chosen Vessel, to bring back sweet assurance to the faith which is the threshold of the way that leadeth to salvation. But I, why should I go thither? or who alloweth it? Æneas am I not, nor am I Paul: nor I myself, nor any others deem me worthy of it. Wherefore if I resign myself to go, I tremble lest my going be but foolhardy. Thou art wise, and dost more fully understand than I can speak."

And as one who wisheth not that which he wished, and for new fancies changeth his resolve, so that he turns him wholly from his undertaking; even in such state was I on that dark slope; for, while I pondered, I brought to naught the enterprise, that was at first so readily embraced.

"If I have rightly understood thy speech," answered the shade of him of mighty mind, "thy spirit is assailed by cowardice, which oftentimes perplexeth man, so that it turneth him away from honoured enterprise, even as uncertain sight turneth a beast when it is growing dark. That thou mayest free thee from this apprehension, I will tell thee wherefore I came, and what I heard at the first moment that waked my pity for thee. I was among the spirits in suspense, and a lady

called to me, so blessed and so beauteous, that I besought her to command me. Her eyes shone brighter than the star, and sweetly and softly she began her speech to me, in her own language, even as the angels speak: 'O gracious spirit, Mantuan-born, whose fame abideth still upon the earth, and will abide unto all time: one whom I love, albeit unloved by fortune, is so impeded in his way upon the untrodden slope, that he hath turned him back in terror; and, from what I have heard of him in heaven, I fear he may be even now so far astray, that I may have stirred too late to lend him aid. Up then, and with thy eloquent speech, and with what else thou hast meet for his release, help him in such wise that I may be thereby comforted. I am Beatrice who cause thee to go. I come from a place whither I would fain return. Love it is that sent me forth, the love that urgeth me to speak. When I shall come into the presence of my Lord, I will oft speak to Him in praise of thee.'

"Then was she silent, and thereon I began: 'Lady of virtue, through which alone the race of man excelleth all that is contained within the heaven of lesser circles: so welcome to me is thy bidding, that to obey, were it even now accomplished, would seem to me too late; there needs no further to unfold that thou desirest. But tell me the reason, why thou dost not disdain to come down here to this low centre, from out the spacious realm whither thou yearnest to return.'

"' Since thou desirest to know so fully, briefly


will I tell thee,' she made answer to me, 'why I have no fear of entering here. It were right to fear only those things that have the power of working evil to others ; no others are to be feared, having no element of dread within them. Such am I created by God, in His mercy, that your affliction toucheth me not, and the flame of this burning is powerless against me. In heaven there is a high-born lady who is moved so to compassion at the trial to which I send thee, that on high she softeneth to relenting the judgment that yieldeth not. She called Lucia in her entreaty, and said : " Now is thy faithful one in need of thee, and I commend him to thee." Lucia, foe to every cruel thought, uprose, and came to where I was, as I was seated with the aged Rachel. She said : " Beatrice, true praise of God, why lendest thou not thine aid to him that loved thee so, who for thy sake forsook the common crowd? Hearest thou not the piteous tone of his complaining? Seest thou not the death that warreth with him by the river, over which ocean hath never boast?" Never were men on earth so swift to seek their good, or shun their hurt, as I was, when these words were uttered, in coming down from my abiding-place of bliss, trusting in thy pure eloquence, that is an honour unto thee and eke to them whose ears have heard it.' After that she had said this to me, in tears she turned her gleaming eyes away from me ; whereby she made me still more eager to come :

and I have come to thee even as she wished; I have rescued thee from the presence of the beast that drave thee from the straight way to the mountain beautiful. What is it then? Wherefore, wherefore tarriest thou? Why nestleth in thy heart such cowardice? Why art thou not possessed of daring and of courage; since three such blessed damosels concern them for thee in the court of heaven, and my own speech giveth thee promise of so much good?"

As flowers, bowed low and closed by the frost of night, uplift them opening wide upon their stems, what time the sun hath shed his radiance on them; even so was it with me, in my ebbing valiancy: and such a flood of noble courage came streaming to my heart, that I began as one whose fetters are unloosed. "O clothed with pity she, that came to succour me! And gracious thou, that didst give heed so speedily unto the words of truth that she addressed to thee! Thou, by thy words, hast inflamed my heart with such eagerness to go, that I am turned even to my first resolve. On then; for both have but one wish: thou art my guide, thou art my lord, and thou my master."

So spake I unto him, and as he passed along, I entered on the deep and woody path.

CANTO III.

“HROUGH me lieth the way to the city of tribulation; through me lieth the way to the pain that hath no end; through me lieth the way amongst the lost. Justice it was that moved my august maker; God's puissance reared me, wisdom from on high, and first-born love. Before me created things were not, save those that are eternal; and I abide eternally. Leave every hope behind, ye that come within.”

These words I saw writ in sombre tint high on a gate. Wherefore I said: “Master, their meaning I find it hard to comprehend.” And he, as one that knew, made answer: “Here must one leave behind all distrust; here must all cowardice be dead. We are come to the place where I have told thee thou shouldst look upon the sorrowing multitudes who have lost the happiness which intellect hath power to provide.” And laying his hand on mine, with joyful countenance, whereat I was assured, he led me in to look upon the things man hath not seen.

Here sighs and lamentations and loud cries re-

sounded through the starless air, wherefore at the first I wept to hear them. Tongues of many nations, utterings of horror, words of tribulation, tones of anger, voices loud and hoarse, and amongst them the sounds of hands, made an uproar that circled unceasingly in that ever darksome air, even as the sand when the hurricane bloweth. And I, whose head was girt about with terror, exclaimed: "Master, what is this that I hear? What multitude is this that seemeth so overcome by agony?"

And he made answer to me: "Such hapless state the joyless souls of those sustain, who lived their lives untouched by either infamy or praise. They are huddled together with that base crew of angels who rose not in revolt, nor kept their faith with God, but were for self alone. Heaven drove them out that its brightness might remain undimmed; nor doth the depth of Hell receive them, for the damned would glory over them."

And I: "Master, what troubleth them so sore, that they are forced to wail in such loud tone?"

He answered: "I will tell thee of it very briefly. These have no hope of death, and their blind life is so degraded that they are envious of every other lot. The world suffereth not tidings of them to exist. Mercy and Justice hold them in scorn: let us not speak of them, but look, and pass away."

And I, who looked, beheld a flag, that whirling round, sped along so swiftly that it seemed to me

to scorn all rest. And close behind it came so long a train of people, that I could not have believed that death had unmade so many. When I had recognised some amongst them, I saw and knew the shade of him who through lack of spirit had made the great refusal. Straightway I understood, and felt assured that this was the dastard crowd, hateful to God and to His enemies. These abandoned creatures, who never were possessed of life, were naked, and sorely stung by hornets and by wasps that were there. These made their faces stream with blood, which, mingling with their tears, was caught by loathsome snakes about their feet. And then as I turned to look beyond, I saw crowds upon the bank of a mighty river, wherefore I said: "Master, vouchsafe to me to know who they are, and what instinct maketh them so eager to pass over, as, through the dim light, I discern they are." And he made answer to me: "All will be told thee when we come to stay our steps on the gloomy shore of Acheron."

And then with eyes bent low in shame, fearing my speech might have offended him, I held my peace until we reached the river.

And lo! an old man, hoary with ancient locks, draweth towards us in a boat, crying out: "Curse on you, sinful souls! Never hope to see the sky! I am coming to ferry you to the other shore, into the darkness that is for ever, into flame and into frost. And thou that standest there, living soul,

betake thee from these that are dead." But when he saw that I did not betake me from them, he said : " By other ways, by other havens, must thou approach the shore—not here—to get thee over. There needs a lighter keel to bear thee." And my guide said to him : " Charon, trouble not thyself : thus is it willed, where what is willed hath power to be accomplished ; and ask no more."

Straightway the shaggy jaws of the boatman of the darksome tarn were motionless, around whose eyes were circling flames. But the spirits there, jaded and raimentless as they were, changed colour and gnashed their teeth, soon as they heard the cruel words. They fell to blaspheming God and their parents, the human race, the place, the time, the seed of their sowing and of their births. Then in all their thronging crowds, the while they loudly wailed, they gathered them back together to the accursed shore, that awaiteth everyone that hath no fear of God. The demon Charon, with eyes like burning coal, beckoning them, collecteth all : whoever loitereth, him smiteth he with his oar.

And as the leaves drop off in autumn-time, one fast behind the other, until the branch restoreth all its spoils unto the earth ; in like fashion do the sin-cursed seed of Adam, one by one, fling themselves from off that bank, as the signal is given, even as a bird that answereth its call. So pass they over the dark wave, and or ever they come to touch the other shore, once more

another throng is gathered here. "My son," my gracious Master said, "those that pass from life under God's wrath must needs foregather here from every land; and they are eager to cross the stream, for God's justice goadeth them so, that fear is turned to yearning. Never a guiltless soul passeth this way; and therefore, if Charon crieth out against thee, well mayest thou comprehend the import of his speech."

These words being uttered, the dim-lit plain trembled so violently, that the remembrance of my alarm even now bathes me with sweat. The tear-steeped earth belched forth a blast, and flashed with ruddy light, which overpowered all my senses; and I dropped down like one on whom sleep seizeth.

CANTO IV.



HEAVY peal of thunder broke the deep sleep within my brain, so that I trembled as one that is awakened by violence. And, standing up, I moved my rested eyes around, and looked with steady gaze that I might know the place wherein I was. True it is, that I found myself upon the brink of the chasm of the valley of tears, which gathereth into a thunder the lamentation that hath no end. So dark, so deep, so cloud-wrapped was it, that, for all my peering into its depths, I could discern naught in it.

“Now let us go below into the sightless world,” began the poet, ashy pale; “I will be first, and thou shalt be second.”

And I, who had remarked his colour, said: “How shall I come, if fear possesseth thee, that art wont to be my comfort when in doubt?”

And he made answer to me: “The agony of those below doth paint upon my face the traces of compassion, which thou dost take for fear. Let us away, for the long road urgeth us to haste.”

Thus moved he on, and thus he made me pass

within the outmost circle that goeth round the chasm. Here, so far as I could tell by listening, there was no wailing, but sighs only, making the air to tremble without ceasing; and this arose from the misery, albeit uncaused by torture, which the crowds felt, and they were many and great; babes and women and men.

My gentle Master said to me: "Thou dost not ask what shades are these thou seest. I now would have thee know, or ever thou goest farther, that they have not sinned; and though they have good works to their account, it sufficeth not, for they knew not baptism, which is the gateway of the faith the which thou dost believe. And as they were before Christ's coming, they failed to worship God aright; and of their number am I myself. For shortcomings such as these, and for no other fault, are we lost: and this our only punishment, that without hope we live in yearning."

Deep sorrow seized my heart when I heard this, for men of mighty worth I knew who were held in suspense within that Limbo. "Tell me, Master mine, tell me, Sire," I began, in my eagerness to be assured of that faith which overcometh all error: "Did any ever depart hence, or through his own deserts, or through some other's intercession, who was thereafter blessed?" And he, who understood the hidden import of my speech, made answer: "I was but newly come into this state, when I beheld one of mighty power come amongst us with victory's symbols crowned. He

led away from us the shade of our first parent, of Abel his son, and that of Noah, of Moses the law-giver, the obedient; Abraham the patriarch, and David the king, Israel with his father and with his sons, with Rachel, too, for whom he wrought so much, and many more; and made them blessed: and I would have thee know that before these no human soul attained salvation."

We stayed not on our way for all his speaking, but meanwhile passed along the thicket, I mean the thicket formed of thronging spirits. Our way was not yet far advanced beyond the crest, when I beheld a fire whose conquering radiancy lit up a world of darkness. Still were we distant a little space, yet not so far but that I faintly could discern that honoured people held the place.

"O thou, that holdest in honour every art and science, who are these, that have such honour, that doth distinguish them from the condition of the rest?"

And he made answer: "The honoured name whose echoes fill your life above, doth win the meed of grace in heaven which so advanceth them." And while he spake I heard a voice: "All honour to the mighty bard; his shade that was departed, cometh again." And when the voice was hushed to silence, I saw four mighty shades draw near to us; nor sad, nor joyful was their mien.

My loving Master commenced to speak: "Mark him that beareth in his hand the sword, who goeth before the three so like a chief. He is

Homer, the lordly lord of song : the other that advanceth is Horace, the satirist : Ovid is the third, and the last is Lucan. And for that each of them shareth with me the name which the one voice proclaimed, they do me honour, and they do well therein."

So saw I gather there the goodly fellowship that followeth that master of supreme song, who soareth like an eagle above the rest.

When they had spoken for some little space together, they turned to me with gesture of salutation ; and my Master smiled to see me honoured so : and yet still higher honour did they do me, for they numbered me with their assemblage, so that I was a sixth amid such mighty minds.

So fared we onwards until we reached the light, holding discourse of things, to pass which by in silence is as well as it was well to speak them where I was.

We drew near to a lordly castle's base, encircled seven times with towering walls, and warded on every side by a beauteous stream. This we passed across, as though it had been solid land. Through seven gates I entered with these sages ; we came into a mead clad with fresh verdure. People were there with eyes tranquil and full of majesty, of great authority in their bearing : they spake but little, with voices full of gentleness. Thus we withdrew aside to a place spacious, bright and lofty, so that in all their numbers they could be seen. And right in front, on the enamelled green,

the mighty shades were shown to me, at having looked on whom my heart exults within me. I saw Electra with many companions, amongst whom I recognised both Hector and Æneas, and Cæsar clad for fight, with his hawk-like eyes. I saw Camilla and Penthesilea. Over against them I saw the king Latinus, who sat beside Lavinia his daughter. I saw the famous Brutus that drove out Tarquin; Lucretia, Julia, Martia, and Cornelia, and unattended and apart I saw the Saladin. After that I had raised my eyelids somewhat higher, I saw the chief of those who know, sitting amongst a brotherhood of philosophers. All look to him, all do him honour. There I saw Socrates and Plato, who before all the others stand closest to his side. Democritus, who buildeth the world on chance, Diogenes, Anaxagoras, and Thales, Empedocles, Heraclitus and Zeno: and I saw the worthy gatherer of the essences, I mean Dioscorides: and I saw Orpheus, Tully and Linus, and Seneca the moralist: Euclid the geometrician, and Ptolomæus, Hippocrates, Avicenna and Galen, Averrhoes who made the mighty commentary. I have no power to tell the tale of all in full, and that, because my lengthy theme so presseth me, that oftentimes my words fall short of what was there.

The company of six breaks into two; by another way my sage guide leads me forth from the tranquil air, into the air that trembled; and I come into a place where is no gleam of light.

CANTO V.



O passed I from the first circle down into the second, which enfoldeth lesser space, and suffering so much the greater, that it goadeth to cries of lamentation. There standeth Minos, grinning in horrid fashion; in the entrance he examineth into the transgressions, passeth judgment, and sendeth to doom, even according as he girdeth himself. I mean, that when the sin-born soul cometh before him, it standeth wholly confessed; and this searcher of sins seeth what place in hell is meet for it: he encircleth himself with his tail times as many as the circles he would have it sent down. Crowds of spirits are there at all times standing before him: each in turn, they pass to judgment; they speak, they hear, and then are they hurled down.

“O thou that comest unto the abiding-place of sorrow,” said Minos to me, when he perceived me, leaving the doing of his dread employment, “have a care how thou comest in, and to whom thou dost entrust thyself: let not the gaping of the entrance play thee false!”

And unto him my guide: "Wherefore dost thou too call aloud? Seek not to stay his fate-appointed going: thus is it willed where what is willed hath power to be accomplished: and ask no more."

And now the sounds of sorrowing begin to make themselves heard: now am I come to where sore complaining striketh on mine ear. I came into a region where was no light; that rang with moans, even as the sea moaneth under the tempest, when buffeted by winds in conflict. The hellish whirlwind, that resteth never, beareth the spirits onwards in its rush; wheeling and smiting it vexeth them. When they are come over against the broken ground, there shrieks arise, complaining and lamentation: there they cry aloud in imprecation against the power of God. I came to know that to tortures of such a kind were doomed sinners in the flesh, who make their better judgment the thrall of lust. And as in winter time starlings are borne on their wings, in large and crowded flock; even so beareth this blast these sinful spirits. Hither and thither, high and low, it whirleth them, nor ever cometh hope of any rest to cheer them, nor even of lesser punishment.

And as cranes speed onwards, chanting their droning notes, shaping themselves into long file high in air; even in such wise saw I the shades approaching, uttering cries of sorrow, borne on that blast. Wherefore I said, "Who be these folk whom the black gust molesteth so?"

“The first of those concerning whom thou wishest to have information,” then made he answer to me, “was empress of many tongues. So wasted was she through the vice of luxury, that in her code she made lust even as law, to rid her of the reprobation she incurred. She is Semiramis, who, as we read, reigned in the stead of Ninus, and was his spouse: she ruled the land o’er which the Soldan holdeth sway. The other is she, that love-sick did herself to death, and broke faith with the ashes of Sichæus; and next them is voluptuous Cleopatra.”

Helen I saw, who was the cause of such a rolling age of suffering; and I saw the great Achilles, whose last fight was with love. Paris and Tristan I saw; and more than a thousand shades he showed me, and pointing with his finger told me their names, whom love had severed from our life.

When I had heard my Teacher name the dames of other days and their gallants, compassion overcame me, and I became as though I were bewildered. I began: “Poet, fain would I speak with yonder twain that move together and seem to be so light upon the wind.” And he made answer to me: “Thou wilt see when they are nearer to us; and do thou then implore them by the love that leadeth them; and they will come.”

So soon as the wind drave them towards us, I lifted up my voice: “O souls sore spent with sorrow, approach and speak with us, an it so be that none forbid it.”

As doves obedient to the call of love, with pinions wide spread and motionless, wing their way through air by yearning borne unto their pleasant nest: even so came they forth from the crowd where Dido is, drawing towards us through the offensive air, so strong was my compassionate appeal.

“O living one, gracious and full of tenderness, that through the dun air comest here to us whose blood hath stained the earth: were but the Lord of the universe our friend, our prayers would rise to Him that He might send thee peace: as thou hast shown compassion for our luckless fate. Of whatsoever it listeth thee to hear and speak, of that will we hear and speak, while the wind is hushed, even as it now is. The city of my birth sitteth by the sea, there where the Po, with all its tribute streams, cometh down to be at rest. Love, whose flame quickly seizeth upon the gentle heart, enamoured him of that fair form of which I was bereft, and the manner still afflicteth me. Love, that from none beloved accepteth aught less than love, took me so irresistibly with pleasing him, that, as thou seest, it doth not leave me yet. Love led us to one death: Cain's place of doom awaiteth him who reft us of our life.”

Such words were borne to us from them. When I had heard those sore afflicted spirits, I bowed my face, and held it low, until the Poet said to me: “What dost thou ponder on?” When I made answer to him, I began: “Alas! what

thoughts of love, what yearning, lured them to that unhappy pass!"

Then turned I again towards them, and spake and began: "Francesca, thy torment maketh me to weep tears of pity and of sorrow. But tell me; in the season of your loving sighs, by what, and in what fashion, gave you love to know desires till then unveiled?" And she made answer to me: "No deeper sorrow is, than to recall a time of happiness, in misery's hour,* and this thy Teacher knoweth. But if thou hast concern so great to learn our loves' first source, I shall do even as one that speaketh in his tears. We read one day, to while the hour, of Lancelot, how love enthralled him: we were alone, with never a thought of harm. And oft and oft that reading brought our eyes together and drave the colour to our cheeks; but one point, only one, it was that overcame us. When that we came to read of how the smiling lips he loved were kissed by lover such

* The origin of this sentiment has been generally attributed to Boethius. Mr. J. C. Collins, the author of "Illustrations to Tennyson," has, however, recently pointed out that it is to be found in Pindar, and in a form which shows that it had passed into a proverb even at that early date.

φαντι δ' ἔμμεν
τοῦτ' ἀνιαρότατον, καλὰ γινώσκοντ' ἀνάγκη
ἐκτὸς ἔχειν πόδα. Pyth. iv., 510-12.

If the idea be a borrowed one in Dante's case, it is probable that he took it from the Book of Wisdom, with the contents of which, in its Latin form, he appears to have been very familiar: "Duplex enim illos acceperat tædium, et gemitus cum memoria præteritorum," xi. 13 (Vulgate).

as he, he that no more shall e'er be parted from me, kissed my mouth trembling through. Our Galahad was the book and he that penned it: that day we read in it no more."

And while the one spirit spake these words, the other wept so bitterly, that in my deep compassion I swooned away, as though I were dying, and fell even as a corpse falleth.

CANTO VI.



WHEN that my sense had come again to me, which was entranced in looking on the misery of the two kindred souls, that utterly bewildered me with sadness, new tortures I see around me and new tortured ones, howsoever I move, and whithersoever I turn and gaze.

I am in the third circle, that of the rain that ceaseth not, accursed, cold, and heavy: its flowing and its fashion know no change. Huge hail-drops, murky water, and snow, keep falling through the misty atmosphere; the soil that soaks it in is rotting. Cerberus, the pitiless and outlandish beast, barks in dog-like fashion through triple throat above the souls that lie immersed there. Red are the eyes he hath, his beard foul and black, his belly gross, and his paws armed with talons. He claws the shades, he flayeth and he teareth them. The rain maketh them to howl like dogs: of one side they make themselves a screen for the other, and many is the time they turn them, the godless wretches.

When Cerberus, the mighty reptile, caught

sight of us, he opened wide his mouth and showed his fangs; nor ever a limb he had but quivered. And my Guide spread wide his hands; he took up earth, and with full palms hurled it into his ravenous jaws. And as the dog, that barking craveth for food, and is appeased as he devoureth the meal, busied and battling only to gulp it down; so was it with the foul faces of the demon Cerberus, who thundereth above the spirits so, that they would fain be deaf.

We passed across the shades whom the heavy rain oppresseth, placing our feet upon their shadowy forms that wear the shape of bodies. They lay upon the earth in all their multitudes, save one that raised himself into a sitting posture the moment he beheld us pass in front of him. "O thou, that through this hell art being led," he said to me, "recognise me, if thou hast the wit. Thou wast born or ever I was unborn."

And I made answer to him: "The misery that possesseth thee doth haply take thee from my recollection, so that it doth not seem as though I ever saw thee. But tell me who thou art, that comest to be in such a place of sorrow, and under punishment of such a kind, that if there greater be, none is there that galleth more."

And he made answer to me: "The city, which teemeth so with envy, that even now the sack is full to overflowing, held me within its walls, in the untroubled life above. You citizens, you used to call me Ciaccio: through the accursed

sin of gluttony I am rotting, as thou seest, in the rain; and I, unhappy spirit, am not alone, for every one of these, for like sin, is doomed to a like punishment;" and more he spake not.

I made reply to him: "Ciaccio, thy suffering so sorely weigheth on me, that I am fain to weep at it; but tell me, if thou canst, how will it be with the citizens of the faction-sundered city; if there be any just man there? And tell me why such discord hath assailed it."

And he made answer to me: "When the long strife is over, they will resort to blood, and the Forest party will drive the other forth with mighty violence. And then, or ever three suns rise, must the conqueror fall, and the other get the upper hand, helped by the strength of him who even now playeth fast and loose. For a long space will it hold its brow uplifted, and hold the other down with heavy weights, however it weep thereat, and blush for shame. Two just men are there, but none there give them heed; pride, envy, and avarice, are the three sparks with which their hearts are kindled." Here brought he to an end his melancholy speech.

And I said unto him: "Yet still I wish that thou wouldst teach me, and vouchsafe unto me the favour of further speech. Farinata and Tegghiaio, that were so worthy; Jacopo Rusticucci, Arrigo and Mosca, and others, too, whose minds were bent on doing good, tell me where are they, and

grant me to know them ; for a deep longing constraineth me to learn if heaven's sweetness be their lot, or poisonous hell."

And he made answer : " They are among the blacker shades ; other sin than mine beareth them downwards to the depths ; if thou goest down so far, thou mayest behold them. But when thou comest to the pleasant world above, I pray thee bring me to men's recollection. No more I say to thee ; I answer unto thee no more."

Then turned he his straight-set eyes askance ; he cast a look at me and then bent his head down, and as it sank he fell, like unto the other sightless ones.


And my guide said to me : " He waketh no more until the sounding of the archangel's trumpet. When the enemy shall come in his power, each will find again his joyless sepulchre, will take unto himself again his flesh and form, and hear the sound whose echoes ring throughout eternity."

We passed along through the decaying mass of mingled shades and rain with measured tread, discoursing a little on the life to come : wherefore I said : " Master, these tortures, will they increase when the great doom is spoken, or will they lessen, or continue as galling as before ?" And he made answer to me : " Go back upon the science thou hast read, which would have us believe that the more a thing is perfect, the more it feeleth pleasure, and likewise pain. Though these cursed

souls may never come to true perfection, yet do they hope thereafter to attain it more than now."

We went along that winding road, speaking of many things the which I do not repeat ; we came to where was the descent : there we found Pluto the arch-enemy.

CANTO VII.

“APE SATAN, pape Satan aleppe,”
Pluto began with grating voice.
And that courteous sage, who knew
all, said, that I might be comforted:
“Let not thy terror give thee annoy,
for, be his power what it may, he will not stay thy
going down this rocky steep.”

Then to the bloat lips turned he, and spake:
“Be still, accursed wolf; consume thyself within
with thine own rage. Our journey to the pit is
not without good cause; so is it willed on high
where Michael wreaked vengeance on the re-
bellious herd.”

As sails, swelled by the breeze, drop down in
tangled heap, what time the mast is riven; so
dropped to earth the pitiless beast. Thus went
we down to the fourth hollow, advancing farther
on the melancholy strand, that gathereth into its
folds the sin of all the world.

Ah me! Justice of God, that heapeth up un-
heard-of toils and tortures in numbers such as
I beheld! And why doth man's transgression
scourge man so?

As doth the billow away above Charybdis, that breaketh with the wave on which it dasheth; even so must they that have their dwelling here wheel in their dance. Here saw I dwellers in greater multitudes than elsewhere, on one side and the other, with mighty howling, rolling weights with strength of chest: they dashed against one another, and straightway each turned him, rolling back, and shouting: "Why hoardest thou?" and "Why squanderest thou?"

So through the foul round wheeled they backwards, on either hand, unto the opposite point, shouting once again their drone of scorn. Then each one turned, when through the half-round he had come again to the other jostling-place. And I, whose heart was well-nigh pierced, exclaimed: "My master, tell me now what people are these, and if those all were priests, those with shorn heads upon our left?"

And he made answer to me: "Never a one of them is there but was in earlier life so blind of soul, that his spending knew naught of moderation. Their barking voices tell thee this full clearly, when they draw near to the extremities of the circle, where contrary sin doth hurl them apart. These were priests, that have no hairy covering on the head, and popes and cardinals, in whom greed worketh with its most wondrous potency."

And I said: "Master, among so many in such plight, some I should surely recognise, who bore

the stain of vices of 'such kind.'" And he made answer to me : " Vain thought thou dost conceive : the blind life that hath made them base, now maketh them dark beyond all recognition. For all time will they run butting against each other : these shall come forth from the grave with hands clenched tight, and these with close-cropped locks. Ill-spending and ill-keeping hath reft from them the world of brightness, and plunged them in this hurly-burly ; and what it is, I use no fine words to describe. Here mayest thou see, my son, the fleeting mockery of wealth that is the sport of Fortune, for sake of which men strive with one another. For all the gold that is, or ever hath been beneath the moon, could not procure repose for one of these weary souls." " Master," I said to him, " now tell me once again, this Fortune, on which thou didst just touch, what is she, that holdeth so within her clutches the good things of the earth ?"

And he made answer to me : " Besotted race, how deep the ignorance that harasseth you ! I wish thee now to take upon thy lips my judgment of her.

" He whose knowledge surpasseth all other knowledge, created the heavens and gave them what should guide them ; and in such wise, that every part should lend its light to every other part, diffusing its brightness without distinction. In like fashion, did He ordain, for worldly glitter, a guide and director over all ; to change at varying

seasons vain possessions, from nation to nation, from one race to another, beyond the let of human wit. Wherefore one nation holdeth sway, another wasteth, the while they carry out her ordinance, which lieth hid from sight, even as a serpent in the grass. Your knowledge hath nothing wherewith to oppose her: she taketh forethought, shapeth her judgments, and lordeth it in her domain, even as the other gods in theirs. The changes that she worketh know never truce. Necessity maketh her swift; so quickly crowding come the things that suffer alteration. This is she that is so often put in pillory, ay, even by them that should shower praises on her, heaping, in their perverted judgment, reviling and evil words upon her. But she is of the blessed, and never heedeth it. Happy amidst the other first created ones, rolleth she her wheel, and in her bliss rejoiceth.

“But let us now go down to misery more intense. Already every star is setting, that was ascending when I began my journey, and loitering overmuch is not allowed.”

We crossed the circle to the other bank by a bubbling spring that tumbles down a cleft worn by its stream. The water was darker far than purple-black: and following the swarthy waves we made our way down by a strange path. It maketh a pool called Styx, this melancholy streamlet, when it hath flowed down to the base of the gray forbidding slopes. And I, who stayed

my steps, all intent on looking, saw people in that slough laden with mire, all naked, with indignation in their looks. They smote each other, not with their hands alone, but with head and chest and feet, rending each other piecemeal with their teeth.

My gentle Master said: "My son, thou seest now the souls of those of whom anger got the upper hand: I wish thee moreover to believe for certain, that underneath the water there are people that utter sighs, and make this water bubble on its surface, as thine eyes may tell thee whatever way they turn. Lodged firmly in the slush, they keep saying: 'Filled with sorrow we were up in the pleasant air which the sun maketh glad, our breasts laden with vapour that maketh sad the heart: and here our sorrow continueth under the black mire.' This refrain they gurgle in their throats, for power they have not to utter it in distinct words."

So went we round a great sweep of the noisome fen, betwixt the dry bank and the rotting mass, with eyes directed upon those that gulp down the filth.

At long length we approached the base of a tower.

CANTO VIII.



SAY, continuing, that, long ere we reached the lofty tower's base, our eyes went upwards to its battlements, because of two small lights, the which we saw set there, and yet another, answering the signal from so far away, that the eye could scarcely catch it. And I, turning me to the Sea of all knowledge, said: "What saith yon light? and what answer sendeth back the other fire? And who are they that made it?" And he to me: "Out on the filthy waves thou canst already see that which we wait for, if the fen's vapour doth not conceal it from thee."

Never did bowstring yet discharge an arrow, that sped so swiftly through the air, as through the water did a tiny vessel which I saw come towards us then, steered by a single helmsman, who cried aloud: "Art thou arrived, foul spirit?"

"Phlegyas, Phlegyas," said my Lord, "this time thou criest aloud to little purpose. Thou shalt not have us but while we cross the flood."

And as one that learneth of some deep deceit that hath been wrought against him, and straight-

way is filled with resentment; even such was Phlegyas in his gathered wrath.

My Guide went down into the boat, and then made me embark close after him; and not until I was within it, did it seem freighted. No sooner were my Guide and I in the craft, than the old prow went forward, cleaving the wave more deeply than was its wont with others.

Whilst we were traversing the sluggish channel, a figure, covered with mud, uprose before me, and said: "Who art thou that comest before thy time?" And I made answer to him: "If I come, I do not abide: but who art thou that art become so brutish?"

He answered: "Thou seest that I am one who mourn."

And I to him: "Abide thou then, curst shade, in mourning and in tribulation! I know thee well, for all thy covering slime."

Then stretched he both his hands towards the boat: whereat my Master, gathering his intent, thrust him back, exclaiming: "Away with thee to the other dogs!"

Then threw he his arms about my neck, kissed my face, and said: "Indignant soul, blessed be she that laid aside her girdle* against thy coming. This one was when on earth a man of haughty

* Compare Sir W. Scott's "Monastery," ii. 7: "Catherine went . . . and as she walked, the situation which requires a wider gown and a longer girdle, and in which woman claims from man a double portion of the most anxious care, was still more visible than before."

mien : there is no kindly deed to shed a lustre on his memory ; and so his spirit here is filled with fury. How many are there that bear themselves above as mighty kings, that here shall stand like swine in slush, leaving behind them loathing and condemnation !”

And I : “ Master, right gladly would I see him plunged in the broth, before we leave the lake.”

And he said unto me : “ Or ever the shore loometh in sight, thy wish will be accomplished. It were right thou shouldst be gratified in such desire.” A little after that, I saw such havoc wrought on him by the muddy crowd, that even now I offer praise and thanks to God for it. All cried aloud : “ To Filippo Argenti !”

The fiery Florentine spirit turned his own teeth upon himself. Here we left him, nor speak I of him any more.

But on mine ears there smote a sound of lamentation, whereat I opened wide mine eyes, gazing with eagerness before me. And my gentle Master said : “ Now draweth nigh, my son, the city that beareth the name of Dis, its heavy-laden burghers, and its vast crowd.” And I replied : “ Master, even now I surely see yonder within the valley its minarets all scarlet, as though they were but come from out the fire.”

And he said unto me : “ The fire that dieth not, the same that maketh them to blaze within, maketh them red to sight, even as thou seest, in this depth of Hell.”

We passed, however, within the deep-cut trenches, which moat the joyless city round: the walls seemed to me to be of iron. And it was only after making a great round, that we came to a place where the boatman loudly called to us: "On shore with you: the landing-place is here."

Above the gates I saw more than a thousand shades, who had fallen, like the rain, from Heaven, who said in wrathful accent: "Who is he, that hath not tasted death, and passeth through the kingdom of the dead?" And my sage Master made a sign to show he wished to speak with them in secret.

Then in some measure did they curb their deep disdain, and said: "Come thou alone, and let him yonder go, who with such daring hath made his way into this realm. Let him go back again by his foolhardy path: let him make trial if he knoweth it: for thou shalt tarry here, that hast shown him so dark a land."

Bethink thee, Reader, if I was dismayed at the sound of these accursed words; for I believed that I should never return to earth.

"O my beloved guide, who hast restored me more than seven times to safety, and rescued me from the deep peril wherewith I was confronted, leave me not," I said, "so utterly undone; for if it so be that going farther is denied me, let us at once retrace our steps together."

And that Lord, who had led me thither, said to me: "Be not afraid, for none hath power to let

our way: so strong is He that hath vouchsafed it to us. Await me here, and strengthen and cheer thy fainting spirit with comfortable hope. I will not leave thee in the lower world." And speaking thus, the gentle Father goeth off, leaving me where I was; and I remain in doubt; for yea and nay strive within my brain. I could not catch the words that he addressed to them: but long he had not stood amongst them there, when all rushed back contending in their speed.

These enemies of ours thrust to the doors right in my Master's face, and he remained without, and turned him back to me with measured tread. His eyes were on the ground, and his brows reft of all boldness, and he said, the while he sighed: "Who hath denied to me the abiding place of sorrows?" And he said to me: "Yield thou to no dismay, because my wrath is stirred; I shall surmount the trial, for all that they contrive within to stay me. This arrogance of theirs is nothing new; for erewhile did they indulge in it at a less secret gate, the same that even to this hour is found unbarred. Above it thou hast seen the legend that slayeth hope: and even now on this side of it, there cometh down the steep, traversing the circles without guide, one of such power, that through his aid the city will be opened to us."

CANTO IX.



THE hue which cowardice painted upon my countenance, when that I saw my Guide turn back, repressed in him more speedily his unwonted choler. He stopped attentive, even as a man that listeneth ; for the eye could not lead him far through the murky air and gathered mist.

“And yet,” he began, “it is meet we win the fight ; if not—such aid was proffered to us. Ah me ! how long a time it seemeth to me till he I look for come !”

I noted well how he had cloaked his opening speech with what came after—words far different from the first. But none the less did his language strike me with fear ; for, peradventure, I interpreted his broken words as of less favourable import than he meant.

“Down to this depth of the gruesome shell, doth ever any soul descend from the first grade, whose only punishment is hopeless hope ?”

Such question I addressed him ; and he made answer to me : “But seldom doth it happen that

any one of us maketh the journey on which I go. True it is that once before I came down here, conjured by dire Erictho, whose call restored the shades unto their bodies. But for a little space was the vesture of my flesh laid aside, when she compelled me to pass within these walls, to rescue thence a spirit of the circle of Judas. That is the lowest place, the darkest too, the most removed from Heaven, whose circle enfoldeth all: well wot I of the way; so set thy mind at rest. This marsh, which doth exhale the great stench, surroundeth the city of sorrow on all sides, where we cannot enter now without being stirred to wrath."

And more he spake; but I hold it not in my memory; for my eyes had drawn me wholly towards the lofty tower with its crest of fire, where in a moment I beheld three hellish Furies all erect, begrimed with blood, who had the limbs and pose of women, and were begirt with hydras of brightest green. Snakes and serpents had they for hair, wherewith their hideous temples were bound.

And he, for well he knew the handmaidens of the Queen of unending lamentation, said unto me: "Mark the fierce Erinnyes. She on the left is Megæra; she that is weeping on the right is Alecto. Tesiphone is between them." And with this he held his peace.

Each was tearing her breast with her talons; with their palms were they beating themselves,

and shrieked in such loud tone, that in my fear I clung close to the Poet's side.

"Let Medusa come; so shall we turn him into stone," they all cried out, bending low their eyes. "In evil hour we wreaked not vengeance on Theseus for his violent approach."

"Turn back and keep thine eyes fast closed; for should the Gorgon show herself, and shouldst thou look upon her, then were there never more return into the world above." So spake the Master; and himself turned me round, and trusted not my hands, but with his own he closed mine eyes. O ye whose intellects are whole, mark well the teaching that is hidden under the veil of mystery-laden verses!

And now there came, over the ruffled flood, the crashing of a fearful sound, whereat both shores did tremble; in fashion like unto a whirlwind, rushing in conflict with opposing heat, that smiteth the forest, and in its unbridled power shattereth the branches, beateth down and sweepeth them far and wide. Heralded by dust, it passeth onward in its pride, and maketh the wild beasts and the shepherds to flee.

He loosed mine eyes, and spake: "Turn now thy power of sight over that ancient foam—yonder where the smoke is thickest."

As frogs, before their foe the water-snake, scatter in all directions through the flood, till each is huddled at the bottom; so saw I more than a thousand of the lost shades fleeing before

one that passed the Styx on foot with soles unwet. He fanned the thick air from his face, waving his left hand frequently in front of him; and only of that labour seemed he weary. Full well did I perceive that he was Heaven-sent, and I turned me to the Master: and he made signal to me to stand unmoved, and bow myself before him. Oh, how full of indignation did he seem to me! He reached the gate, and with a wand he opened it, for in it there was no resistance.

“Outcasts of Heaven, despised race,” began he, as he crossed the loathsome threshold, “wherefore maketh such arrogance its bidding-place within you? Why kick ye against that will, whose end is never unaccomplished, which oftentimes hath made your dole more bitter? What doth it profit you to butt against the Fates? Your Cerberus—if ye remember yet—has still his snout and throat laid bare for doing so.”

Then turned he back upon the filthy road, nor spake he any word to us: but was like unto a man distracted and beset by other care than that of those who are about him. And we turned our steps towards the city, cheered by the holy words.

Without conflict we came within its walls; and I, who yearned to see of what nature was the inside of such a fortress, when I had passed within, cast my eyes around; and I saw on either hand a mighty plain teeming with tribulation and cruel torment.

Even as at Arles, where the Rhone grows sluggish, or at Pola close by Quarnaro's bay, that closeth Italy and bathes her boundaries, the sepulchres make all the place uneven : so was it here on every side, save that the manner here was more forbidding : for flames were spread amongst the tombs, by which they were so heated through and through, that hotter iron no craft requireth. Their lids were all wide open ; and forth from them there issued such bitter lamentations, that they must needs have come from hapless and tormented souls.

And I : " Master, what are these people, who, entombed within these vaults, make themselves heard by sighs of sorrow ?"

And he made answer to me : " The Arch-heretics are here, together with their followers of every sect ; and the tombs are crowded far beyond what thou dost dream. Like here is sepulchred with like ; and more and less the monuments are heated."

And when he had turned him to the right, we passed between the torments and the towering battlements.

CANTO X.



OW, by a narrow avenue between the city's wall and the torments, my Master passes on, and I behind his shoulders.

“O virtue supreme,” I spake,
“that at thy pleasure dost lead me
around the circles of the sinful: vouchsafe thy
speech to me, and grant me satisfaction in my
longing. Might they, the souls that are lying
within the tombs, perchance be seen? The lids
already are all uplifted; and no one keepeth
guard.”

And he made answer to me: “They shall be
all made fast, when they return here from
Jehoshaphat, with the bodies they have left in the
world above. Here have they their burying-place,
Epicurus and all his followers, who make the soul
and body perish together. Wherefore full soon
within there shalt thou have satisfaction con-
cerning the question thou puttest to me, ay, and
the longing, too, the which thou hidest from me.”

And I: “Gentle Guide, I only keep my heart

concealed from thee that I may speak the less; and thereto, long ere now, thou hast thyself disposed me."

"O Tuscan, who through the city of fire dost pass alive, with utterance so becoming, prithee here stay thy steps. Full clearly doth thy accent bespeak thee a countryman of that proud land, to which I haply have been too severe." Of a sudden these words came forth from one of the vaults: whereat in fear I pressed more closely to my Leader's side.

And he said unto me: "Turn thee round; what art thou doing? See Farinata yonder, who has raised himself. All from the girdle upwards thou shalt behold him."

Ere this I had riveted mine eyes on his; and he uplifted himself, breast and brow, as though he treated Hell with utter scorn. And my Guide's resolute and ever-ready hands thrust me between the tombs towards him, saying: "Let thy words be measured."

And as soon as I was come unto the foot of his sepulchre, he looked at me a moment, and straightway, in almost tones of scorn, he asked me: "Who were thine ancestors?"

I, as I was desirous to yield obedience, concealed it not, but fully told him all; upon which he raised his brows a little, and then he spake: "Savagely hostile were they to me and to my fathers, and to my faction, so much so that I scattered them two several times."

“If they were driven forth, both times did they return again from far and wide,” I made him answer; “but yours have never learned that art aright.”

And then, close by his side, there rose to view a shade uncovered to the chin: I think it had raised itself upon its knees. It gazed about me, as though possessed of a desire to see if any other were along with me; but after that its suspicions were wholly set at rest, it spake, in tones of sorrow: “If it be by surpassing genius that thou goest through this gloomful prison, where is my son, and wherefore is he not with thee?” And I made answer to him: “I come not of myself: he that waiteth yonder leadeth me through this place, whom, it may be, thy Guido held in contempt.”

The words he spake and the fashion of his punishment had ere this read his name to me: wherefore was my answer so full. Suddenly rising erect, he cried: “How saidst thou? He *held*? Liveth he not still? Doth not the light we love fall on his eyes?” When he perceived that I paused awhile before making answer, he sank supine, and showed himself no more.

But that other high-souled one, he at whose bidding I had stayed my steps, changed not his countenance, nor moved his neck, nor stooped his side. “And if,” he said, continuing the words he spake at first, “they have learned that art but ill, it galleth me more even than this bed. But not fifty times shall the face of the queen who reigneth here be bright again, ere thou shalt

know the grievous burden of that art. And, as thou fain wouldst win thy way to the pleasant world, say, wherefore is that people in all its laws so unrelenting against my kin?"

Whereat I answered him: "The rout and mighty carnage, which changed the Arbia's colour into crimson, are the cause why such decrees are enacted in our temple."

And after that he had shaken his head, sighing the while, he said: "In that I was not single-handed; nor, of a surety, without good cause should I have joined the others. But I was single-handed there, where each one gave his voice to lay waste Florence, I, who in sight of all stood champion of her cause."

"Then, as thou fain wouldst see thy race at rest, unloose for me," I begged of him, "this knot wherewith my mind is now entangled. It seemeth, if I rightly hear, that ye have power to see what time is bringing in its train or ever it come; but touching things that are, have no such power."

"We see," he said, "the things which are remote from us, like one whose sight is dim: so much of light the sovereign Lord doth still vouchsafe to us. When they are drawing nigh, or come to being, our power of apprehension is wholly vain: and but for what others bring to us, we know nought of your human state. Wherefore thou mayest understand that our knowledge shall be entirely dead, from the moment when the gate of futurity shall be closed."

Then, as though smitten by regret for my fault, I said: "Go now and tell that fallen one, that his son is still amongst the living. And if I held my peace before, what time I should have answered, let him know, I did so because my thoughts till now were clouded with the doubt from which thou hast set me free." And already my Master was calling me back, wherefore, with greater eagerness, I urged the spirit that he would tell me who was with him. He spake to me: "With more than a thousand do I lie here: the second Frederick is inside here, the Cardinal too; and of the others I am silent." Wherewith he disappeared. And I turned my steps to the ancient Poet, pondering on that speech which seemed to bode me ill. He moved on, and as he went he said to me: "Wherefore art thou bewildered so?" And I satisfied him in his inquiry.

"See that thy memory hold fast what thou hast heard against thee," the Sage enjoined me. "And now fix thy attention here": and he raised his finger. "When thou shalt come before the sweet radiance of her whose beauteous eye beholdeth all, thou shalt learn from her the journey of thy life." Thereupon he turned his footsteps to the left.

We left the walls behind us, and went towards the centre, by an avenue that striketh into a valley, whose baneful odour was wafted even to the upper air.

CANTO XI.



VER the precipice of a towering cliff, formed by huge red stones in a circle, we came upon a crowd in still more cruel plight. And here, by reason of the horrible excess of stench which the deep chasm casteth up, we drew aside into the shelter of the cover of a great tomb, where I beheld a legend, saying: "I guard Pope Anastasius, whom Photinus led astray from the true path."

"Our going down must needs be slow, so that our sense may first grow somewhat accustomed to the noisome blast, and afterwards we shall not heed it." So spake my Master: and I said unto him: "Bethink thee of some means of compensation, in order that the time may not go by unprofitably." And he replied: "Thou seest that I am thinking even of that."

"My son," he thereupon began to say, "within these stones are three concentric circles, resembling those thou leavest. All three are filled full of accursed spirits: but that the sight of them alone hereafter may suffice thee, hear in what manner, and for what crimes, they are confined.

“Of every evil act that earneth hate in Heaven, the end is injury; and every such end, by either violence or fraud, heapeth sorrow upon others. But forasmuch as fraud is man’s peculiar vice, it is the more displeasing unto God; and therefore they who dealt in fraud are set beneath, and greater is the torture that doth afflict them. The whole first circle is for the doers of violence: but, forasmuch as force may be used against three persons, it is divided in its structure into three rounds. Force may be used against God, against one’s self, against one’s neighbour; to them, I mean, and their belongings, as thou shalt learn in unambiguous speech.

“Through force, death and grievous wounds may be inflicted on one’s neighbour; and on that which he hath, destruction, conflagration, and ruinous extortion: wherefore all slayers of men, and everyone that smiteth in malice, plunderers and robbers, in separate herds, the first round holdeth in torment. Man may lay violent hands upon himself, and eke on his possessions; and for this reason is it that in the second circle he must needs repent in unavailing agony, whoever strippeth himself of your world, gambleth, and squandereth his fortune, and mourneth in the land where he should dwell in gladness.

“Force may be used against the Deity, denying in one’s heart and blaspheming Him, holding nature in scorn, and her munificence: and for this reason is it that the lesser circle brandeth

with its seal Sodom and Cahors, and him that in his heart speaketh in scorn of God.

“Fraud, with which there is no conscience but is bitten, a man may practise upon one who putteth his trust in him; and upon one who giveth no credit for fidelity. This last kind seemeth only to sever the bond of love which nature weaveth; and therefore is it that in the second circle there nestle hypocrisy, flattery, workers of sorcery, treachery, robbery and simony, panders, barrators, and such-like refuse.

“In the other kind, the love which cometh of nature is forgotten, as also that which is thereunto after joined, from which a special faith is born; and for this reason is it that in the smaller circle, the place where is the centre of the universe, above which Dis is throned, each traitor is consumed for ever.”

And I: “Master, full clearly doth thy speech proceed, and excellently doth it distinguish this deep gulf, and those with whom it is peopled. But tell me: those of the greasy marsh, whom the blast driveth, and the rain smiteth, and those that come together with tongues so sharp, wherefore are they not punished within the fiery city, if God's wrath be upon them; and if it be not, why are they punished as they are?”

And he said unto me: “Why strayeth thy apprehension so far beyond its wonted range? Or are thy thoughts turned somewhere else?”

Callest thou not to recollection the words in which thy favourite ethics treat of the three habits, which Heaven suffereth not, incontinence, malignity, and senseless bestiality? And how incontinence is less offensive to God, and calleth down upon itself a lesser condemnation? If thou dost rightly ponder this belief, and callest to thy thoughts who they are that, higher up beyond these circles, repent in torture, then mayest thou clearly see why they are kept apart from these offenders, and why God's justice dealeth in lesser indignation its blows upon them."

"O sun, that bringest healing unto all clouded vision, thou grantest unto me such satisfaction in thine unravelling, that doubting doth delight me no less than certainty. Turn thee again backward a little space," I said, "to where thou sayest that usury offendeth God's goodness, and unloose that knot for me."

"Philosophy," he said to me, "to him that understandeth it, showeth, not in one place alone, how nature shapeth her going from God's intelligence, and from its art; and if thou dost closely scan thy Physics, thou wilt find, or ever many leaves be passed, that even your art, as far as it is able, followeth her, even as a learner doth his teacher, in such wise that your art is, as it were, grandchild to God. By these two, if thou recallest to thy mind an early page in Genesis, doth it behove mankind to win their means of life, and to excel. And for that the usurer goeth

another way, he slighteth nature both in herself and follower, putting his trust elsewhere.

“ But now come after me, as I am pleased to go: for the Fishes are shimmering above the horizon, and over Caurus the Wain is stretched in all its length, and far off yonder is the way down the steep.”

CANTO XII.



THE place to which we came, in order to go down the bank, was rugged as the Alps; and in its nature such moreover, by reason of what was there, that every eye would shun it. As is the precipice which, on this side Trent, came crashing on the bank of the Adige, through earthquake, or through failing prop, and in such wise that from the mountain's crown, from where it came away, down to the plain, the stony side is so upturn as to afford a passage to one upon the summit; even such was the descent of this craggy steep. And on the crest of the shattered gorge was stretched the source of Crete's ill-fame, the same that was conceived by the pretended cow. And when he saw us, he bit himself even as one whom anger lasheth within.

My Sage called out to him: "Thou thinkest, peradventure, the Duke of Athens is here, who in the world above laid death upon thee? Away with thee, beast, for this one cometh not under the guidance of thy sister, but maketh his journey that he may look upon your torments."

As a bull that breaketh his bonds, what time he feeleth the death-stroke on him; that cannot go, but reeleth to and fro; even so I saw the minotaur do. And he that was ever ready cried out: "Run to the pass; it were well thou didst descend whilst the fury is upon him."

So we took our way down by these jagged heaps of rock, which oftentimes, with the unwonted weight, started from beneath my feet. Thinking, I went along; and he said: "Perchance thou thinkest of the ruined mass that is sentinelled by that angry beast I laid but now to rest? Now I would have thee know, that, the other time I came down here into the depth of Hell, this rocky pile had not yet fallen. But surely, if I distinguish aright, a little ere He came, who wrested from Dis the great prey of the outmost circle, the deep foul valley so trembled through its length and breadth, that I made sure the universe had felt love's thrill, whereby, there are who think, the world has been reduced to chaos many times: and at that moment this ancient rocky heap, here as elsewhere, came rolling down. But fix your gaze upon the valley, for there draweth nigh the river of blood, in which they boil who work by violence an injury on their neighbour. O sightless greed! O foolish wrath! that dost in our short life so goad us; and after, in the life that hath no end, dost sink us in such evil plight."

I saw a spacious moat, bent bow-shape, so as

to stretch its arms about the entire plain ; even as my guide had told me. And in the space between it and the base of the bank, Centaurs were charging each on the other's heels, equipped with arrows, as in the world above it was their wont to go a-hunting. On seeing us come down, each came to a halt, and three came out from the troop, first making choice of bows and shafts. And one of them cried out from a distance : " What is the punishment to which ye come, ye that descend the steep ? Declare from where ye are ; if not, I draw my bow."

My Master said : " To Chiron will we answer when we are yonder face to face with him : thy temper, to thy cost, was ever headstrong thus." Then touching me, he said : " This is Nessus, who died for beauteous Dejanira, and of himself wrought vengeance for himself. He in the midst, whose eyes are on his breast, is the great Chiron, who reared Achilles : the other is Pholus, who was so filled with wrath : round and round the moat they go in thousands, piercing with their arrows any shade that riseth from the blood beyond the limit apportioned to his sin."

We came close to these nimble beasts : Chiron took an arrow, and with the notched end moved back his beard upon his jaws. When he had bared to view his huge mouth, he said to his companions : " Have ye perceived that he that is behind moveth what he treadeth on ? The feet of the dead are not wont to do so."

And my kind Guide, who was already at his breast, where the two natures come together, made answer: "He is indeed alive; and thus alone must I show him the darksome valley: necessity, not pastime, bringeth him to it. From chanting Hallelujah, came she that set me to this unwonted office; he is no thief, nor I a thieving spirit. But by the worth that giveth me to move my steps through road so rough, vouchsafe to us one of thy troop, that we may go beside him, and he may show us where the crossing is, and bear my comrade on his back; for he is not a shade to tread on air."

Chiron turned him on his right breast, and said to Nessus: "Go back, and guide them so; and should another troop confront you, make them retreat."

We went away with our trusty escort, along the edge of the seething scarlet, where they who boiled within it uttered loud shrieks. I saw some plunged up to the brows: and the huge Centaur said: "These are tyrants, whose spoils were blood and wealth. Here they are mourning their pitiless exactions: Alexander is here; and savage Dionysius, who brought long years of sorrow upon Sicily; and yonder brow, that weareth hair so black, is Azzolino; the other, yonder, he of the fair complexion, is Obizzo of Este, who, in truth, was done to death on earth by his unnatural son."

Then I turned me to the Bard, and he said:

“Let him be now thy chief guide, and me thy second.”

Farther on a little, the Centaur halted above a crowd that seemed to rise as far as the throat out of the seething stream. He pointed out to us a shade, companionless and apart, saying: “He it was that in God’s bosom pierced the heart that still is revered on the Thames.”

Then saw I people who kept their heads, ay, and even their whole chest above the river; and many I recognised amongst them.

So, little by little, the blood sank lower, until it scalded only the feet; and there lay our way across the gorge.

“As, on this side, thou seest the seething stream continually growing shallower,” the Centaur said, “I would have thee believe that, yonder, on the other side, its bottom sinketh more and more, until it cometh again to where the tyrants are doomed to mourn. At this side God’s Justice tormenteth that Attila, who was a scourge on earth; Pyrrhus, too, and Sextus; and wringeth for ever the teardrops, which with its boiling it maketh to flow, from Rinier of Corneto, and Rinier Pazzo, who on the highway waged such ruthless war.”

Then turned he back, and crossed the ford again.

CANTO XIII.



NESSUS had not yet reached the other side, when we set out through a thicket, where was never a trace of pathway. No green leaves were there, but of a dusky colour ; no slender boughs, but gnarled and knotted ; no fruit, but only thorns and poison. The wildwood beasts that between Cecina and Cornuto shun the laboured tilths, know never underwood so thorny or so tangled. Here the foul Harpies build their nest, who drave the Trojans from the Strophades with gloomy presage of impending woe. Broad pinions have they, and human necks and faces, clawed feet, and their great bellies fledged with plumes : perched on strange trees they pour forth dismal notes.

And my kind Master began to say to me :
“ Before thou goest farther in, know that thou art within the second zone, and shalt be, until thou art come upon the forbidding sand. Be thy sight therefore keen, and so shalt thou behold things which would rob my words of credence.”

I heard on all sides heaving of groans, but saw no one that uttered them ; wherefore I stopped all

in bewilderment. I think he thought that I thought this chorus of voices came through the boughs from people who were hiding because of us. Wherefore my Master said: "Tear but a leaf from off these plants, and all the thoughts thou harbourest will be vain."

Then put I forth my hand in front of me a little, and plucked a spray from off a huge briar; and the trunk cried aloud: "Why dost thou rend me?" And when that it became discoloured with blood, it began again to cry aloud: "Why dost thou lacerate me? Hast thou no spirit of commiseration? Men have we been, and now are turned to trees. Thy hand might well have shown more mercy, had we been the spirits of serpents."

As with a green branch, that at one end is burning, and at the other splutters, and crackles by reason of the air escaping; so from this broken spray came forth together words and blood: wherefore I dropped the twig and stood like one in fear.

"If he, vexed spirit," said my Sage, "could have believed, ere it was yet too late, that which he now hath seen accomplished according to my speech, he would not have put forth his hand against thee: but that which seemed incredible to him urged me to prompt him to an act that weigheth heavily upon me. But tell him who thou wast; so that, by way of reparation, he may restore thy good name in the world above, whither it is allowed him to return."

And the trunk spake: "With such fair words thou dost entice me, I have no power to hold my peace; and let it not be irksome to thee, if I be lured to say what I shall say at some little length.

"I am he that had in charge both keys of Frederick's heart; and turned them, locking and unlocking, with such quiet skill, that there was scarce one whom I withheld not from his secret thoughts. So true was I to the high office that was mine, that it cost me my life's blood.* The harlot that never turned her lecherous eyes from Cæsar's halls, that common source of death, that vice of courts, stirred all men's minds into a flame against me; and those that caught the flame inflamed Augustus so, that welcome honours turned to dismal sorrows. My soul, in its contemptuous mood, thinking by death to flee contempt, made me, with all my justice, unjust against myself. By this tree's fresh-grown roots, I swear to you, I never broke fealty to my lord, who was so worthy of honour. And if one of you go back to the world, set up the memory of my name, that lieth cowering still under the blow that envy dealt it."

He paused for a space, and then the Poet said to me: "Since he is silent, lose not the opportunity, but speak, and ask of him, if thou wouldst fain hear more."

Wherefore I said to him: "Do thou inquire of him once more whatever thou thinkest would con-

* Lit. 'both veins and pulse.'

tent me, for I have not the power ; such pity doth fill my heart."

Wherefore he resumed : "Once more, imprisoned shade—so may the man accomplish for thee generously all that thy speech entreateth—consent to tell us, how it is that the soul cometh to be bound within these gnarled knots ; and tell us, if thou canst, if any ever maketh its escape from out these limbs."

Thereat the trunk puffed a strong breath forth, and straightway the air took shape in some such words : "Briefly ye shall be answered. When the fierce soul leaveth the body, from whence, of its own act, it hath been rudely severed, Minos consigneth it to the seventh abyss. Into the wood it falleth, nor is there any place apportioned to it ; but on the spot where chance may toss it, there, like a grain of corn, it sprouteth. It riseth to a sapling and to a wildwood plant ; and then the Harpies, feeding upon its leaves, cause agony, and for that agony an outlet. As others will, so we shall come to seek our spoils, but none the more for that shall any of us again array himself therewith ; because it were not right that man should have that which he taketh from himself. Hither shall we drag them, and through the melancholy glade our bodies shall be hung, each on the briar to which his tortured shade belongeth."

We waited still expectant by the trunk, thinking it wished to tell us more, when we were startled by a noise, as when a man perceiveth the

wild boar and the hunt approach the place where he is stationed, hearing the crashing of the beasts and boughs. And lo! upon our left two shades, naked and torn, in such wild flight, that they broke all the branches through the wood. And he in front called out: "Haste thee, now haste thee, death." And the other, who thought his pace too slack, cried aloud: "Lano, thy limbs showed other speed than this at Toppo's jousts." And then, perchance because his breath had failed, he thrust himself into a bush. Fast on their track the wood was filled with swarthy she-dogs, hungry and speeding onwards, like greyhounds bursting from the leash. Into him, that crouched, they drave their teeth, and tore him piecemeal: then carried off his wretched limbs. Then my guide took me by the hand, and led me to the bush that wailed in bootless lamentation through its bleeding wounds.

"O Jacob of Saint Andrea," it cried, "what did it profit thee to make a screen of me? What blame have I for thy sin-laden life?"

When that my Master had halted by it, he said: "Who wast thou, that through wounds so many shootest forth in blood thy words of sorrow?"

And he made answer to us: "Ye spirits that are come to look upon the shameless mutilation that hath so stripped my leaves from off me, gather them to the foot of the unhappy shrub. I was a dweller in the city that changed its earliest

patron for the Baptist, wherefore he shall for ever,
because of this, heap sorrow on her with his art.
And were it not that where they cross the Arno
there liveth still some semblance of him, these
burghers, who raised its walls anew above the
ashes that were left by Attila, would have spent
their labour in vain.

“Of my own house I made myself a gibbet.”

CANTO XIV.



GATHERED up the scattered leaves, for love of my native land constrained me; and gave them back to him who was already hoarse. Thence came we to the border, where the second zone is parted from the third, and where Justice is seen to work in terrifying forms.

To set forth in clearness things never seen till then, I say we came unto a tract that suffereth no growing thing upon its soil.

Wreathed around it is the wood of lamentation, even as the gloomy foss encircleth the wood. There on the outmost brink we stayed our steps. The soil was a thick and barren sand, and, in its fashion, even as that which of old was trodden by Cato's feet.

O Vengeance of God, how mightily shouldst thou be feared by all who read that which was given mine eyes to look upon! Herd upon herd I saw of naked shades, that all were wailing in sore distress; and different was the law which seemed to be imposed on each. Some lay supine

upon the ground ; some sat crouched all together ; and others were pacing by uninterruptedly.

Larger far was the crowd that went around ; the other less, that lay down in their torment ; but all the louder was their voice in pain. And slowly falling, over all the sand there rained down broad flakes of fire, like snow-flakes in the Alps what time the wind is still. And as the flames which Alexander, in India's burning regions, saw fall to earth in fiery intensity upon his soldiery ; whereat he bethought him with his troops to trample down the soil, seeing the fire was easier to quench while yet alone : even in such wise the eternal fiery stream descended ; and, as it fell, the sand was turned to flame, like tinder under the flint, to make their suffering double.

Ever restless was the twinkling motion of their unhappy hands, now here, now there, brushing from off their bodies the fresh-fallen flame.

I began : " Master, thou that overcomest all things, save the unyielding demons that came forth to bar our way at the entrance of the gate ; who is the huge one yonder, that seemeth not to heed the burning ; and lieth crouching and contemptuous, so that the rain seemeth not to soften him ? "

And he himself, aware that I asked my Guide concerning him, cried out : " What I was in life, that am I still in death. Though Jove should tire his smith, of whose hands, in his wrath, he

took the sharpened bolt wherewith he struck me down in my last day ; and though, one after the other, he tire the rest in Mongibello at their smoky stithy, crying aloud : ' Help, trusty Vulcan, help ! ' as aforetime he did for Phlegra's fight : and though he dart his shafts against me with all the force he may, yet should he never win thereby the vengeance that will make him glad."

Then spake my Guide with voice so strong, that I had never heard him speak more loudly : " O Capaneus, for that thy pride knoweth not abatement, thou art the more afflicted ; no torment other than thine own blind rage would be a chastisement meet for thy madness."

And then with speech more gentle turned he to me, saying : " One of the seven kings was he that laid siege against Thebes, and he held, and seemeth still to hold, God at defiance, and little doth he seem to do him honour : but, as I said to him, his own disdain is the adornment that best befits his breast. But come now after me, and see thou set not yet thy feet upon the fiery sand ; but keep them ever close anigh the thicket."

Holding our peace, we came to where a tiny streamlet comes bickering from the wood, the scarlet hue of which still maketh my hairs to start on end. As the rivulet cometh forth from Bulicame, which, as it cometh forth, the sinful women share amongst them ; so down the sand the streamlet moved along. Its bed and both its overhanging banks were turned to stone,

the margins too along its sides; from which I gathered that there was our place of crossing.

“In all that I have shown thee, since we came within the gate, whose threshold is denied to none, nothing has passed before thine eyes that calleth more for note than this same stream, which quencheth all the flames above it.” These words were from my Guide: wherefore I begged he would vouchsafe to me the food for which he had vouchsafed the appetite.

“In the sea’s midst,” then said he, “there lieth a waste land, which beareth the name of Crete, under whose king the world was erewhile sinless. There is a mountain there, which once was glad with fountains and with leaves; its name is Ida. To-day it is abandoned, like some old chattel. Rhea chose it of old to be her son’s safe cradle, and the better to hide him when he cried, she made the place to ring with shouts. Deep in the mountain there standeth erect a huge and aged man, who keepeth his shoulders turned towards Damiata, and looketh towards Rome, as though it were his mirror. Of the pure gold his head is formed, and finest silver are his arms and chest: thence, to the joining of his legs, he is of brass: and downwards thence, of choicest iron, save that his right foot is of burnt clay; and, as he standeth, he leaneth more on this than on the other. There is no portion, save the gold, but it is scored by a fissure that droppeth tears, which, as they gather, win their way through yonder cavern. Their

course is down the rocks into this valley: they form Acheron, Styx, and Phlegethon; then, by this narrow gully, they still flow down until they sink so low, that one may not go lower: they make Cocytus; and what that stagnant pool may be, thou shalt behold: wherefore I tell thee nothing of it here."

And I said unto him: "If this same brooklet floweth by such a course down from our world, how is it that it only cometh into sight at yonder bank?" And he made answer to me: "Thou knowest that the place is ring-shaped, and albeit thou hast journeyed far, descending ever to the left downwards to the bottom, thou hast not yet completed the whole round; wherefore if any new thing should appear to us, it need not strike thy gaze with wonderment."

And I again: "Master, where be Phlegethon and Lethe, for of the one thou sayest nought, and tellest that the other formeth itself out of this rain?"

"Surely, in all thy questions thou dost please me," he made reply to me, "and yet the red and boiling flood might well supply the answer to one of those thou puttest to me. Lethe thou shalt behold, but not within these depths, where the souls are wont to come to bathe, what time their sins are purged away through penitence." Then he said: "Now is it time to leave the thicket; see thou come close behind me: the margins that are not burning afford a path; and over them all fire is stifled."

CANTO XV.



OW one of the stony margins bears us on, while the fumes from the stream form such a shade above it, that it shelters both water and banks against the fire. As the Flemings, between Cadsand and Bruges, what time they fear the flood that rusheth in upon them, build up the dam by which the sea is driven back: and as the Paduans, along the Brenta, to keep their towns and castles safe, or ever Mount Chiarentana feel the thaw: such, in their form, were those banks, albeit the master, whoever he might chance to be, had made them none so lofty nor so broad.

So far were we already from the wood, that, though I had turned back, I could not have detected where it lay, when we came face to face with a crowd of shades that were coming along the bank, and each of them stared at us, as one is wont at eventide to stare at another under a young moon's light; and as an aged tailor doth over his needle, so gathered they their eyebrows as they gazed upon us. Thus riveted by the eyes of such a troop, I was recognised by one,

who took me by the skirt, and cried out: "What wondrous chance!" And I, when he put forth his arm towards me, so closely fixed my eyes on his burnt visage, that his seared countenance could not prevent a knowledge of him from breaking on my mind: and bending down my face to his, I made reply: "Art thou here, Ser Brunetto?"

And he made answer: "My son, take it not ill if Brunetto Latini go back with thee a little space, letting his comrades go their way."

I said to him: "With all my power of prayer I pray thee do so; and if thou art desirous that I should sit me down beside thee, so will I do, if it but please him yonder, for with him am I journeying."

"My son," he said, "whoever of this herd pauseth but for an instant, must lie an hundred years, with never power to fan himself when the fire smiteth him. Wherefore pass on; I will go by thy side, and join my household after, that goeth wailing their unending miseries."

I dared not come down from the track to journey on a level with him; but kept my head bent low, as one that goeth reverently.

He began: "What chance or destiny, ere thy last day be come, leadeth thee down here? And who is he yonder, that showeth the way?"

"In the untroubled life above on earth," I answered him, "I lost my way within a valley, or ever my days were at their full. But yesternorn I turned my back on it: and as I turned

again towards it, he yonder stood before me, and by this path is he leading me towards home."

And he to me: "Follow but thy star, so shalt thou fall not short of glory's haven, or else my judgment was at fault in happier days. And were it not that I had died so early, beholding heaven so full of bounty towards thee, I should have given thee comfort in thy labours. But that ungrateful people, in their malice, who in olden days came down from Fiesole, and even still cleave to the mountain and the cliff, for thy good deeds will make themselves thy enemies: and good cause is there too; for the sweet fig may not put forth its fruit amongst sour crabs. On earth the story from old time calleth them blind, a race given up to greed, to envy and to pride. See that thou cleanse thee of their ways. So much of honour doth thy destiny reserve for thee, that both their factions will yearn in hunger for thee: but the grass shall be far from the goat. These brutes of Fiesole, let them make havoc of themselves, nor ever touch the plant—if any such still reareth its head in their rank soil—in which there liveth yet the godly seed of those old Romans, who still dwelt on, when it became the nest of such malignity."

"Were my heart's longing all fulfilled," I answered him, "thou hadst not yet been outlawed from man's living state: for there is deeply seated in my memory, and now doth it touch my heart, that dear and kindly image, so fatherlike,

that once was thine, when in the world above. hour after hour, thou taughtest me how man may make himself immortal: and right it were, while life is mine, that on my lips should dwell the gratitude I bear thee. That which thou utterest touching my fate, I write it, and treasure it with yet another speech, for her interpreting, who knoweth to interpret, if I but come to her. This much I wish should be made manifest to thee: so conscience chide me not, for Fortune I am ready, as she willeth. Such earnest is no new thing in mine ears; and so let Fortune turn her wheel, even as she listeth, and eke the clown his mattock."

Thereupon my Master turned him round towards the right, and looked at me; then spake: "He listeneth well that layeth it to heart."

Nor any the less do I go on discoursing with Ser Brunetto, inquiring of him who are the best known and chiefest of his companions. And he made answer to me: "To know of some were well; of the others silence were more a thing to praise, for the time would be too short for so much speech. Know then, in few, that all were of the church, and scholars deeply versed, and of great name, by one same sin defiled in the world above. Priscian goeth with the sorry crowd, and eke Francesco d'Accorso: and furthermore, thou mightest have looked, if thou hadst any care for suchlike scurf, on him who by the Servant of Servants was translated from the Arno to Bac-

chiglione, where he left his vice-warped nerves. More would I tell thee; but my companionship and speech may last no longer, for yonder I behold fresh fumes ascending from the sand. Folk come with whom I have no place. For my Treasure, fain would I win thine approbation, in the which I still live on; I ask no more of thee."

Then he turned him back, and seemed like one of those who at Verona run for the green flag in the plain; and seemed to be a winner and not a loser in the race.

CANTO XVI.



WAS already come into a place where the rumbling roar of water, falling in the other circle, broke on mine ear, like the hum which bee-hives make; when three shades, speeding fast, together broke away from a troop that passed along under the scourging torments' rain. They came towards us, and each of them cried out: "Stay thee there, thou that by thy raiment dost seem to us to be one from our abandoned city." Ah me, the scars I saw, both fresh and old, seared by the flames upon their limbs! Even yet it paineth me, if I but think thereof.

My Teacher listened to their crying; he turned his face towards me, and he said: "Stay thy steps awhile, it were well to show them courtesy; and were it not for the fire which the nature of the place darts forth, I should say that haste was more for thee than them."

Then, as we paused, again took they up their old drone; and when they reached us, they formed themselves, all three, into a ring.

As was the wont of champions, naked and

smear'd with oil, watching for grip and vantage, or ever they come to strokes and blows : even so, as they wheeled around, each kept his face directed towards us, so that the neck and feet moved ever in contrary ways. And one of them began : " If the unhappiness of this unstable region, and our scorched miserable features, awake disdain for us and for our prayers ; let our fame incline thy heart to tell us who thou art, that all unharmed dost press thy living feet upon the soil of Hell. He, on whose footprints thou seest me tread, all stripped and naked though he go, was of a higher rank than thou dost think. He was the grandson of good Gualdrada ; Guido Guerra was he by name, and in his day wrought much by counsel and by sword. The other, he that treadeth the sand behind me, is Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, whose reputation should be cherished in the world above. And I, whose place of torment is beside them, was Jacob Rusticucci ; and, in good sooth, my savage-temper'd wife, more than aught else, hath been my bane."

Had I been sheltered from the fire, I should have thrown myself below into their midst, and I believe my Teacher would have allowed it ; but inasmuch as I should have scorched and burnt myself, fear got the better of the good intentions that made me eager to embrace them.

Then I began : " It was not scorn, but sorrow, that your condition planted in my heart—and all so deeply too, that many days will pass ere all its

traces fade away—when my Lord here addressed the words to me, that made me think that some such people as ye are were drawing near. Of your own city am I, and ever with affection have I rehearsed and heard the mention of your deeds and honoured names. The bitterness forgotten, I wend my way to find the pleasant fruit my trusty Guide hath promised; but to the very centre I needs must first descend.”

“Tell me,” he then made answer to me—
“so may thy soul for many days hold o’er thy limbs its governance; so may thy fame be bright when thou hast passed away—do courtesy and valour, as of old, still find a dwelling-place within our city, or have they utterly departed from it? For Guglielmo Borsiere, who now hath suffered for some little space along with us, and goeth yonder with his comrades, sorely afflicteth us with his words.”

“Florence, the new-come race, and fortunes quickly won, have fostered arrogance and unrestraint in thee, so that even now thou mournest thereat.” Thus cried I with uplifted face: and the three, taking my words as an answer, gazed each upon the other, as, when the truth is told, men stand at gaze.

“If at another time,” they all replied, “the granting of another’s wish come all so easy to thee, well is it for thee, that thus speakest from thy heart. Wherefore if thou shouldst make thy way from out these realms of wretchedness, and

turn to look again upon the stars in their beauty, when it will glad thy heart to say, 'It is past, fail not to speak concerning us unto our people.'

Then they broke up the ring, and, as they sped away, their hurrying legs seemed to be wings. An Amen could not have been uttered or ever they were gone; wherefore my Master thought that it was time to go. I followed him, and we had gone but a short way, when the sound of water was so close to us that, had we spoken, our voices would scarcely have been heard.

Even as that river—which at the first hath its own channel from Monte Veso eastwards on the left slope of the Apennine; which is called Aquacheta higher up, before it leave the glen to fall into its bed below, and as it neareth Forli beareth the name no longer—resoundeth from the heights away there above San Benedetto, in tumbling down a precipice, where there were room for even a thousand; in such wise did we hear this dark-dyed flood come thundering down a jagged steep, so loudly that in a little time it would have hurt the ear.


I had a cord entwined about me; and once I thought by means of it to catch the leopard with the spotted hide. When, as my Guide commanded, I had unloosed it wholly from me, I reached it to him, gathered in a coil. Whereat he turned him to the right, and standing back a little from the brink, he hurled it down into the deep abyss.

“Surely,” I said within myself, “some unlooked-for thing must answer this new signal, the which my Master followeth so closely with his eyes.”

Ah me! how cautious should men be with those who do not look upon the deed alone, but with the mind's eye peer into the thoughts!

He said to me: “Ere long that which I wait for will rise to the surface; and what thy mind in fancy pictureth, must soon be uncovered to thy sight.” A man should ever close his lips, as best he may, before the truth that cometh in falsehood's guise; for, through no fault of his, it putteth him to the blush. But here I have not power to hold my peace: and, Reader, by the words of this my Comedy, I swear to thee—so may they not come short of lasting approbation—I saw, through the dark and heavy air, a figure swimming to the surface, a thing for wonderment even to the stoutest heart; even as a man returneth who on occasion diveth down to free an anchor tangled in a rock, or other thing concealed beneath the sea, who stretcheth wide his arms above him, and gathereth up his feet.

CANTO XVII.

“ O! now the beast with the pointed tail,
that boreth through mountains, and
breaketh battlements and weapons;
lo! he that tainteth the whole world
with rottenness.” Thus began my

Guide to address me, and beckoned to him to come ashore near the end of the stony way which we had traversed. And that uncleanly image of deceit came on, and brought his head and chest to land, but drew not his tail upon the bank. His face was the face of a just man; so fair to look upon was his hide without, and the rest was all a serpent's trunk. Two talons had he, shaggy even to the armpits: his back and breast and both his flanks were bright with spots and rings. Never yet did Turk or Tartar work cloth with richer colour, groundwork and embroidery,* nor ever was web so varied laid by Arachne on the loom.

As barks at times rest on the shore, part in water, part on land; and as, away amongst the greedy Germans, the beaver lieth in wait to wage

* Reading: “Non fer mai drappo,” etc.

his war; so lay the loathsome monster upon the brink that forms a belt of stone about the sand. High in air his tail quivered in all its length, raising aloft the venomous fork wherewith the point was armed, even as a scorpion's is.

My Leader said: "Now must we turn our way a little towards the evil beast that croucheth there." Wherefore we went down to the right, and moved ten paces on the edge, the better to avoid the sand and flame. And when we were come to him, a little farther on I saw folk seated on the sand, close by the hollow space. Here my Master said to me: "That thou mayst carry with thee a full and perfect knowledge of this circle, go now and note their bearing. Let thy speech there be but brief: until thou comest back, I will hold parley with yonder beast, that he may lend us his strong shoulders."

And so, still farther on the uttermost edge of this seventh circle, I went alone, where the joyless folk were sitting. Their sorrow welled forth at their eyes; with waving hands, on this side and on that, they sought to save themselves, at one time against the fire, at another against the burning soil. Even so do dogs in Summer-time, now with snout, and now with paw, when they are bitten by fleas, or flies, or gnats. When I turned mine eyes upon the faces of some of them, on whom the torturing fire came pouring down, I knew not one amongst them: but I perceived that from the neck of each there hung a pouch,

of a certain colour and with a certain emblem, and it seemed as though their eyes did feed thereon.

And as I came amongst them, looking around me, I saw azure upon a yellow purse, that bore the form and posture of a lion; and then, mine eyes' range widening, I saw another one, as red as blood, that showed a goose more white than butter.

And one that had his small white sack emblazoned with a pregnant sow in azure, said unto me: "What dost thou in this gorge? Away with thee; and since thou art still living, know that Vitaliano my old neighbour will one day sit here on my left. Paduan am I, amongst these Florentines, and many a time they thunder in mine ears, crying aloud: 'Let the flower of knight-hood come, who will bring hither the pouch with the three he-goats!'" Then twisted he his mouth, and thrust out his tongue, even as an ox that licks its nostril.

And I, fearing that longer stay might vex him who had enjoined me to make but little stay, turned my back upon those wearied spirits.

I found my Guide, who had already mounted on the back of the savage creature: and he said to me: "Now be thou brave, and full of daring. Henceforth must our downward way be by stairs so fashioned. Get thee up in front: I wish to be between, so that the tail may have no power to harm thee."

And even as one who is so near the quartan fever's fit, that his nails are already livid, who trembleth through all his frame if he but look upon the shade; such I became as his words came to me: but his reproof wrought a sense of shame within me, which maketh a servant brave when a master is kind.

I sat me down on those huge shoulders: "Take heed to put thine arms about me"—so did I wish to say, but the words came not as I thought. But he who at other times had bravely helped me in face of other danger, as soon as I had mounted, put his arms about me, and held me up: and said: "Geryon, bestir thee now: wide be thy circles, and gentle the descent; bethink thee of the unwonted burden which thou dost bear."

As a bark, backwards and still backwards, glides from its resting-place, even so he launched himself from the shore: and as he came to feel himself entirely free, he turned his tail to where his breast had been, and, stretching it, he moved it like an eel's, while with his talons he gathered the air unto him.

Greater cause for fright I do not think there was, when Phaeton threw down the reins, whereby the heavens were scorched, as even still is manifest; nor when unhappy Icarus felt his sides grow wingless through the melting of the wax, while his sire loudly called to him: "Thou art going a perilous way"—than was mine own, when I perceived that I was encircled by the air on every

side, and saw all view extinguished, save only of the beast. Slowly, slowly went he floating on, wheeling and sinking, but I could not observe it, save that a breeze was blowing in my face, and from below.

And now upon the right far under us, I heard the swirling waters making a horrid din: whereat, with eyes turned downwards, I stretched forth my head. Then was I even more terrified at our headlong descent: for I saw fires and heard lamenting, that caused me to cower down trembling in every limb. And then I saw, for till then I had not seen, our going down and going round, by the great horrors which were approaching us at every point.

As the falcon, long on the wing, that seeing neither lure nor bird, causeth the falconer to exclaim, "Ah me! thou'rt coming down"—descendeth on jaded pinion to the place from where he soared aloft with speed, in circle after circle, and alighteth far aloof from his keeper, sulky and sullen: even in such wise did Geryon land us at the bottom, down at the very base of the jagged rock; and lightened of our bodies' load, darted away even as an arrow from the string.

CANTO XVIII.



HERE is a place in Hell called Malebolge, of iron-coloured stone throughout, as is the circle that doth encompass it. Right in the centre of the hateful plain gapeth a well, exceeding broad and deep; the fashion of which its proper place will tell. The belt, therefore, that remaineth, betwixt the well and the base of the steep stony bank, is round, and hath its bottom divided into ten valleys.

As is the outline of a place, where moat succeeding moat winds round a castle to defend its walls: such was the form which these presented here; and as, in strongholds of such a kind, there are bridges reaching from the gates out to the bank beyond; in such wise, from the rock's low base, stretched craggy ridges, crossing the bastions and the moats, as far down as the well, which uniteth them into a gathered mass.

In such a place did we find ourselves, when we were shaken from off the back of Geryon; and the Poet turned to the left, while I moved

on behind him. Upon the right new misery met my gaze; new torments and new hands to scourge, wherewith the nearest chasm was crowded.

Down in its depths the sinners were stark naked: from the middle point, at the near side, they moved so as to meet us face to face, and on the other side, as we were going, but with longer strides: as the Romans, because of the thronging crowd, in the year of Jubilee, have taken measures to pass the people across the bridge; so that, on one side, all have their faces towards the Castle and move towards St. Peter's; and, on the other, move towards the Mount.

On this side, and on that, along the loathsome rock, I saw horned devils with great whips, who scourged them pitilessly from behind. Oh, how they made them stir their heels at the first strokes! And after that none waited for the second or the third.

As I went along, mine eyes encountered one; and straightway I exclaimed: "Ere now have I had my fill of seeing this one." Wherefore I stayed my feet, that I might scan him well; and my kind Guide halted along with me, and consented to my going back a little space. And that scourged creature thought, by bending down his face, to hide himself, but it availed him little; for I said: "Thou there, that turnest thine eyes upon the ground, if it so be that the lineaments thou wearest do not belie thee, thou art Venedico

Caccianimico: but what doth bring thee to such a rasping* pickle?"

And he made answer to me: "I tell it sore against my will: but thy clear utterance constraineth me, bidding me call to mind the world of other days. I was he who lured the lovely Ghisola to do the Marquis's will, however the distasteful story may be told. And I am not the only native of Bologna that sorroweth here—nay rather, the place is filled so full of them, that tongues so many are not this moment taught to say 'aye truly' in all the land between Savena and Reno's stream: and if thou dost desire or proof or evidence of this, recall to mind our people's greedy heart."

And as he spake the words, a demon smote him with his thong, and cried: "Begone, pander! there are no women here to turn to coin."

I came back to my escort: then, after a few steps, we reached a place where a craggy ridge projected from the bank. This we ascended with but little difficulty, and turning to the right upon its jagged brow, we went our way from out of those everlasting circles.

When we were come to where it gapes below, to form a passage for the scourged ones, my Guide said: "Stay thy step, and let the vision of these other sin-born souls come full upon thee, whose features up to this thou hast not looked

* Compare Aristophanes, *Ραχ*, *κολλήραν και κόνδυλον ὄψον ἐπ' αὐτῆ*.

upon, by reason of their having gone as we were going."

From the old bridge we watched the train that came towards us on the other side, and whom the whip drove on in fashion as before.

My gentle Master, or ever I had asked him, said to me: "Mark yonder towering one that cometh on, and seemeth not to shed a tear for all his suffering. How like a king's the form he still retaineth! Jason is he, who by his bravery and cunning deprived the Colchians of the ram. He passed by Lemnos' isle, when that those daring women, knowing no touch of mercy, had done to death their every male. There, with tokens and with winsome words, did he beguile the maiden Hypsipyle, who had herself erewhile beguiled the rest. Pregnant and love-lorn, he left her there—such crime hath doomed him to such punishment; and for Medea too is vengeance being taken. With him there go all who practise the like deceit: let this much be enough for thee to know of the first valley, and eke of those whom it doth grind within it."

We had already come to where the narrow path crosseth the second bastion, and formeth of it the buttress of another arch. From that point forward we heard folk shrieking in the neighbour chasm, and snorting through their nostrils, and beating themselves with their hands. The banks were coated over with a mould, through the vapour from below, which lay like

paste upon them, repugnant both to eyes and nose.

So deep sunk is the bottom, that the eye failed to reach it before we climbed to the crown of the arch, where the ridge is sheerest. Thither we came, and looking down from thence into the depth, I saw a crowd stifled in filth which seemed to have come from human privies: and while I searched down in it with mine eye, one met my sight whose head was so begrimed with ordure, that it were hard to say if he were clerk or layman.

He shouted to me: "Why dost thou hunger so to bend thy gaze on me more than upon the others in the filth?"

And I made answer to him: "Because, if rightly I remember, I have ere now beheld thee before thy locks were moistened: and thou art Alessio Interminei of Lucca: and that is why I scan thee more than all the rest."

And then he spake, smiting his poll the while: "The flattery, of which my tongue grew never tired, hath sunk me here so low."

And after that my Guide said: "Thrust out thy face a little farther forward, so that thine eyes may fall full upon the features of yonder foul and slattern strumpet, who scratcheth herself there with filth-begrimed nails, now grovelling, and now standing on her feet. It is Thais, the harlot, who made answer to her paramour, when he said: 'Have I great thanks of thee?' 'Nay, marvellously great.' And let so much content our eyes."

CANTO XIX.



SIMON MAGUS! O luckless followers! ye who, like thieves, for silver and for gold defile the things of God, that should be wedded unto holiness; for you the trumpet now must sound, for in the third abyss is your abiding-place.

We had already mounted to the adjoining eminence, on that part of the craggy ridge that hangeth sheer above the middle of the foss. O Wisdom from on high, how great the art thou showest in heaven, on earth, and in the world of sin; how just the dispensation of thy power!

I saw the dark rock full of holes at side and bottom, all of a size, and each of them was round. They seemed to me no larger and no wider than those that in my San Giovanni's stately dome are wrought as standing-places for the baptizing priests; the one of which, and that not many years ago, I broke to save one who was suffocating in it: and this shall be a token to undeceive mankind.

Out of the mouth of each a sinner's feet protruded, and of his legs as far as to the thighs;

the rest was all within. Both the feet of all were aflame; which caused their joints to writhe with force so great, that they would have snapped straw-ropes and cords in sunder. As on things oiled a flame is wont to play upon the outer surface only, so was it here from heel to toe.

“Master,” I said, “who is he that struggleth there, writhing more than all the others that are his comrades, and whom a ruddier flame is withering?” And he made answer to me: “If thou dost wish that I should take thee down by yonder bank that lieth lower, thou shalt hear from his own lips of himself and of his wrongs.”

And I replied: “Whatever pleaseth thee, to me is welcome: thou art my lord, and thou knowest that I shall not oppose thy will, and well thou knowest too the thoughts that are not spoken.”

Then we ascended the fourth bastion: we turned, and went down to the left into the very depth pierced all with holes and narrow.

Nor did my gentle Master suffer me to leave his side, until he brought me close up to the hole in which he lay whose legs made manifest his agony.

“Whoever thou art, unhappy shade,” I then began, “that hast thy upper part below, fixed even as a stake, if thou hast power to do so, speak a word.”

I stood like unto a friar that shriveth a treacherous assassin who, when thrust into the earth, calleth him back, whereby death is delayed.

And he cried out: "Art thou already there and on thy feet, Boniface, art thou already there and on thy feet? By many years hath the writing played me false. Art thou so early glutted with the wealth for sake of which thou didst not hesitate to seize by treachery our Lady Fair, and then to labour in her wreck."*

And I became like unto those that stand as if confounded, by reason of not comprehending what is said to them, and knowing not what to answer.

Then Virgil spake: "Say to him quickly, 'I am not he, I am not he for whom thou takest me.'" And I replied even as I was bidden. Wherefore the spirit twisted his feet convulsively: then with a sigh, and in a voice of sorrow, he said to me: "What, then, dost thou seek of me? If thou art so concerned to know who I may be, that for this thou hast passed the bank, know that I wore the Mighty Mantle: and in all truth I was the She-Bear's son, and all so eager to advance my bear-cubs, that wealth I pocketed above, and here myself. Below my head are the rest dragged along, who were before me in their simony, crushed into the openings in the rock. I too shall drop below, when he arriveth for whom I took thee, what time I put my hasty question to thee. But even now have I had my feet roasting and have been standing thus upon my head, for longer space than he shall have to stand when

* "Macbeth," i. 3, 114.

planted with his feet aflame. For after him will come one of more odious deeds, from out of the West, a shepherd, stranger to all law, and one that well may cover him and me. A second Jason will he be, of whom we read in Maccabees: and as his king was indulgent to that priest, even so shall he that ruleth France be unto this one."

I know not if I was foolhardy here, for my only answer to him was in this strain: "Come, tell me now what price our Lord required of Holy Peter or ever he gave the keys into his wardship? Surely he looked not for aught save 'Follow Me!' Nor Peter, nor the others, asked gold or silver of Matthias when he was chosen to fill the place the guilty soul had lost. Therefore stay on, for fitly art thou punished; guard well the ill-got pelf that gave thee courage against Charles. And were it not that reverence for the heavenly keys, the which thou heldest in happy life, even here forbiddeth me, I should use words far heavier; for avarice such as thine maketh the world to mourn, crushing the good beneath the feet, and setting the unworthy upon high. Shepherds like unto you the Evangelist had in mind, when she that sitteth upon the waters was seen of him committing fornication with the kings; she that was born with the seven heads, and had ten horns to manifest her glory while chastity found favour with her spouse. Ye have made you a God of gold and silver; and in what do ye differ from the idolater, save that he offereth his

orisons to one, and ye to an hundred? Ah, Constantine! of how much ill was cause, not thy conversion, but the dowry the first rich father of the Church received of thee!"

And whilst I spake these words, whether stung by wrath, or consciousness of sin, he plunged wildly with both his feet. I well believe my Guide was pleased, with such approving mien did he listen throughout to the sound of the words of truth I uttered. Therefore with both his arms he took me unto him: and when he had me wholly on his breast, he went up again by the way he had come down.

Nor grew he weary of holding me so pressed to him, until he bore me to the summit of the arch, which forms a causeway from the fourth to the fifth bastion. There he laid his burden gently down, all gentleness upon the steep and craggy ridge, which would have been a difficult way even for a goat: and then another valley opened on my view.

CANTO XX.



OW must I sing of other tortures, and give forth matter for the twentieth canto of the first canticle, which is concerned with those below.

I was already all intent in gazing down into the depth opened before me, which was so wet with streaming tears of agony: and through the winding valley I saw folk coming, in silence and with weeping, at the same pace at which the litany-procession moveth in our world. As my sight went farther down upon them, each of them seemed to be distorted in wondrous fashion, from the chin to where the chest hath its beginning: for their face was turned back upon the loins, and they must needs go backwards; for power to look before them was taken from them. Perchance ere now there have been some so twisted out of shape through stroke of palsy; but I have never looked upon the like, nor do I think it can be so.

Reader, so may God grant thee to profit by what thou readest, consider in thy heart, how I could keep my face unwet with tears, when close

beside me I beheld man's image so disnatured,
that their eyes' tear-drops bathed their hinder
parts where they divided.

I wept indeed, leaning against a rock on the
stony ridge, so overcome, that my Guide said to
me: "Art thou too like the other fools? Here
pity liveth but when it is truly dead. Who is
more lost to righteousness than he whose pity is
awakened at the decree of God? Lift up thy
head, lift it up, and look on him for whom the
earth gaped wide before the Theban people's
eyes, whereat they all cried aloud, 'Whither dost
thou rush, Amphiaraüs? Why dost thou leave
the fight?' Yet never stayed he in his headlong
leap into the chasm, down even to Minos, whose
grasp is laid on all. See how he hath his
shoulders made a chest for him; for that he
yearned to see too far before him, his eyes are
now turned behind, and all his steps are back-
ward.

"Behold Tiresias who changed his outward
form, when having been a male he was turned
into a woman, altering his every limb; and then,
or ever he found again his manhood's plumes, he
needs must lay his rod a second time upon the
twin coiled snakes. Aruns is he whose back is
towards the other's belly, who had a cave for his
dwelling-place amidst the white marble on the
heights of Luni, where delveth the peasant of
Carrara, whose home is far below; from where his
ken was limitless in gazing on the stars and sea.

And she that covereth her breasts, the which thou seest not, she with the flowing locks, whose hair is all at the other side, was Manto, who went her roaming quest through many lands, then rested in the place where I was born. Wherefore I wish that for a little space thou shouldst give ear to me.

“After her father died, and Bacchus' favoured city was brought to slavery, she wandered for a long time through the world. There lieth, in beauteous Italy above, a lake, close by the foot of the Alps that northwards of the Tyrol shut in the German's land, and it beareth the name of Benacus. Through a thousand streams, I believe, and more, between Garda and Val Camonica, the Pennine Alp is watered by the rivers which gather to rest within that lake. In its midst there is a spot where, if they came that way, the Trentine Shepherd and Brescia's too, aye, and Verona's, might grant their benison. There sitteth Peschiera, fortress fair and strong, to hold the Brescian and the Bergamese at bay, where all around the shore is lowest. And there whatever water may not rest within Benacus' bosom, must needs descend and make itself a river down through the verdant meads. Soon as the water maketh head to flow, it is no longer called Benacus, but Mincio down to Governo, where it falleth into the Po. Ere-long its course hath run, it cometh upon a spreading plain, where opening out it maketh a marsh of it, unhealthy often—such its wont—in summer-

time. Journeying towards this place, the heartless maiden spied land amidst the fen, where cultivation there was none, and never dwellers came. There, that she might shun all intercourse with man, she with her menials made her resting-place, to ply her arts; and there she lived, and left her soulless corpse. After a time the inhabitants that were scattered through the places around, gathered them together to the spot, for it was strong by reason of the marsh by which it was surrounded. They raised their city over her lifeless bones; and, after her who had first chosen the place, they called it Mantua, seeking no other augury. Time was its people were more crowded within its walls, before the madness of Casalodi was fooled by Pinamonte's treachery. Wherefore I do enjoin thee, that, if thou hearest ever that my native city had other origin, let no lying tale prevail against the truth."

And I: "Master, the words thou speakest are to my mind so full of truth, and take my faith so strongly, that other words would be to me but as burnt embers. But tell me of the folk that pass before us, if thou beholdest any of them worthy of note; for upon that alone is my mind keenly bent."

Then spake he unto me: "He yonder, from whose cheeks the beard is streaming over his swarthy shoulders, was an augur, what time the land of Greece was left so bare of males that they were hardly found even in the cradles; and

with Calchas he gave the word in Aulis to cut the first cable. Euripylus the name he bore; and so my lofty tragic strain doth somewhere sing of him: well dost thou know it, that knowest its every line. The other yonder, he so spare of flank, was Michael Scot, who knew full well the juggling art of magic wiles. See there, Guido Bonatti; see Asdente, that now were fain he had been constant to his leather and his thread, but all too late repenteth. See the unhappy women who left the needle, the shuttle and the spindle, and took to fortune-telling; with image and with herbs they wrought their sorceries.

“But forward now, for Cain with his thorns already holdeth the confines of both hemispheres, and toucheth the waves beneath Seville, and only yesternight the moon was full: thou must needs well remember it, for ere now she did thee no small service in the deep wood.”

So spake he to me, and as he spake we went our way.

CANTO XXI.



AND so we went from bridge to bridge, discoursing of other things the which my Comedy is not concerned to tell of; and gained the summit, when we halted to look upon the other chasm of Malebolge, and other unheeded lamentations; and I beheld it in all its wondrous darkness.

As in the dockyard of the Venetians the clammy pitch doth boil, to calk their battered ships that are not fit to sail; and in the interval, one buildeth his vessel anew, and one plugs the sides of her that hath made many voyages; one hammers at the prow, another at the poop; some fashion oars, and some are twisting cables; another mends a foresail and a mizen: even so down there was boiling, not through the agency of fire, but God's contrivance, a curdling pitch that covered with its slime the bank on every side. I saw it, but I saw naught else in it save the bubbles which the boiling raised, its huge up-surgings and shrinking back again.

While I was gazing down intently, my Guide,

exclaiming, "Look out, look out!" drew me towards him from where I stood. Then turned I back, like one impatient to behold what he should shun, and whom a sudden terror doth unman, so that, for all his looking, he stayeth not his flight; and behind us I beheld a swarthy demon coming at a run along the summit of the ridge. Ah me, how savage was his aspect! How cruel seemed he as he came, with wings outspread, and nimble on his feet! Astride his shoulders, sharp and towering as they were, a sinner was planted, while he held firmly grasped the tendon of each foot.

"Ho, Malebranche!" so called he from our bridge, "mark there one of the Fathers of Santa Zita: down with him; for I am going back again unto the town that is well stocked with them. There is no man there but is a barrator, save only Bonturo: 'yea' is turned to 'nay' for money there."

He threw him down, and turned back along the stony ridge; and never yet was mastiff unleashed in such wild haste to track a thief.

The other sunk, and rose again, rolled in a heap.

But the demons who were beneath the cover of the bridge cried out: "The Holy Countenance hath never a place down here: the swimming here is of another fashion than that in Serchio's stream: wherefore if thou wouldst keep thee from our gaffs, come not above the surface of the pitch."

Then drave they into him the teeth of more than an hundred prongs, and said : " Here must one trip it under cover, that, if thou hast the wit, thou mayst pilfer on the sly. Even in such wise do cooks compel their menials to thrust the flesh down in the caldron with their hooks, so that it may not float."

My gentle Master said to me : " That it may not be seen that thou art here, crouch down behind a crag, that thou mayst have a hiding-place ; and whatsoever onset may be made on me, have thou no fear, for I have reckoned on all this, as once before I have engaged in riot of this kind."

Then went he on beyond the bridge's head, and as he reached the summit of the sixth ridge, he had good need to show a steadfast front.

With the same fury, the same tempestuous rush, wherewith dogs leap out upon a beggar, who, where he stoppeth, seeketh at once for alms, leaped out those Demons from beneath the arch, and turned upon him all their pikes. But he cried out : " Let none of you be insolent. Before your hook lay hold on me, let one of you step forth to hear me, and then deliberate whether ye shall gaff me."

They all cried out : " Let Malacoda be the one to go." Then one advanced, while the others kept their place, and came to him, saying : " What can this profit thee ?"

" Dost thou believe," my Master said, " that thou couldst see me reach this place, unscathed

till now by all your weapons, without the aid of Will Divine and favouring destiny? Forbid me not to pass, for it is willed in Heaven that I should show another this woody way."

Then was his pride so humbled, that he let the hook fall at his feet, and spake to the others: "Wound him not now." And my Guide called out to me: "Thou that sittest squatting there amongst the crags about the bridge, return to me now without fear of injury." Wherefore I arose and quickly came to him; and the Demons one and all advanced, so that I trembled lest they should break the truce. And even thus had I ere then beheld the soldiery that marched out from Caprona under treaty, in trepidation as they saw themselves amidst their thronging foemen.

I pressed myself close up beside my Guide, nor ever moved mine eyes from off their threatening visages.

They dropped their prongs and spake one with another: "Shall I nick him in the back?" and answered: "Aye, let him have a prod." But the Demon who had held parley with my Guide turned sharply round and said: "Stay, Scarmiglione, stay." And then he said to us: "One cannot journey farther by this ridge, for the sixth arch is down, all shattered to its base: and if it be thy pleasure, nevertheless, to go forward, go up by yonder cavern: hard by there is another ridge that doth afford a passage. Yesterday, five hours later than the present time, twelve hundred and

sixty-six years had run their course, since the road was blocked this way. I am sending yonder a company of my men to see if anyone be taking the air: go with them, for they will not harm you. Up, Alichino and Calcabrina," so he began; "thou, too, Cagnazzo, and let Barbariccia command the ten. Let Libicocco also come, and Draghignazzo; Ciratto with his tusks, and Graffiacane, and Farfarello and the tameless Rubicante; search around the boiling slime; be these under safe conduct as far as the other crag, which still unbroken spans the chasms."

"Ah me! Master, what is this I see?" said I. "Prithee let us go alone without the escort, if thou dost know the way; for, as to me, I have no longing for it. If thou art quick of apprehension, as is thy wont, dost thou not see they snarl and show their teeth, and their brows threaten us with mischief?"

And he made answer to me: "I would not have thee terrified: so let them snarl to their hearts' content, for it is at the boiling wretches they are doing so."

They wheeled along the left bank; but ere they did, not one of them but thrust his tongue far out between his teeth towards their chieftain by way of signal: and he had answered, trumpeting from behind.

CANTO XXII.



HAVE ere now seen troopers move their camp, begin the assault, and muster in review, and at times flying in retreat ; and, Aretines, upon your land have I seen skirmishers, and I have seen foragers on the chase, the clash of tourney, and the shock of jousts, now at trumpet-sound, now at the sound of bells, at beat of drum, and beacon from a castle, at signals of our own, and from abroad ; but troopers never did I see, nor footmen, nor ship that setteth sail by sign from land or star, go forth to such outlandish bugle-sound.

We went upon our way with the ten Demons— what savage comrades ! but with the holy in the church, and with the guzzlers in the tavern. My thoughts were all intent upon the pitch, that I might probe the chasm's every phase, and eke that of the folk that were burning within it. As dolphins when they arch their backs, and warn mariners to bethink them of getting their vessel safe to shore ; so, from time to time, to make their suffer-

ing less, would some sinner show his back, and swifter than lightning disappear again.

As in a ditch frogs sit near the water's edge with only mouth projecting, so that their legs and all their body are hid from view; such was the posture of the sinners everywhere. But on the approach of Barbariccia, like frogs they drew them down again beneath the boiling surface. One I saw, and even now my heart doth shudder at it, tarrying, even as it will happen that one frog stays behind while another darts below. And Graffiacane, who was the next beside him, struck his gaff into his pitchy hair and dragged him up, so that he seemed to me an otter. Ere this I knew the names of the whole troop, so closely had I marked them when they were being chosen, and listened how they called to one another.

“Rubicante,” so shouted all the devilish crowd in chorus, “into him with thy claws, and flay him!” And I said: “Master mine, discover if thou canst who is the wretch that hath fallen into the clutches of his enemies.”

My Guide went close beside him, and asked him whence he came; and he made answer: “In Navarre's kingdom was I born. My mother sent me to serve as henchman to a lord, for she had borne me to a ne'er-do-weel, the waster of himself and of his substance. Afterwards I was servitor to good King Thibault, with whom I set myself to practise barratry, the reckoning for

which I render in this burning." And Ciratto, from out whose mouth projected at each side a tusk, as it were a boar's, gave him cause to feel the ripping power of one of them. The mouse had fallen among pitiless cats: but Barbariccia put his arms about him and said: "Back there, whilst I am hugging him," and turned his face towards my Master. "Question him yet again," he said, "if thou hast wish to know more of him, before some other quite undo him."

Wherefore my Guide said: "Now tell me, of the other guilty ones under the pitch, knowest thou any that is Latian-born?" And he made answer: "Only a little while ago I parted from one who was a neighbour to their land. Would that I were immersed again like him, that I might fear neither their claw nor hook."

And Libicocco said: "We have endured too much," and with his pike he took him by the arm, in such sort that he tore away a piece of flesh, and bore it off. Draghignazzo, too, was eager to clutch at his legs below; so much so that the leader of the ten wheeled round and round with scowling glance.

When they were quieted a little, my Guide straightway inquired of him who was still gazing at his wound: "Who was it from whom thou sayest that thou didst make a luckless parting to come ashore?" And he made answer: "It was Brother Gomita, he of Gallura, vessel of all fraud, who held the foemen of his lord within the hollow

of his hand, and acted by them so, that one and all they praise him for it. He pocketed their money, and without more ado—as is his word—he let them go; and in his other offices as well, he was no petty but a princely barrator. Along with him Dan Michael Zanche of Logodoro spendeth his days, and their tongues never tire of speaking of Sardinia. Ah me! look at that other snarling there. I would speak on, but fear he maketh him ready to tear my scurf.”

And the grand marshal, turning to Farfarello, who was rolling his eyes to aim a blow, exclaimed: “Stand off, accursed bird!”

“If ye have any wish to see or hear Tuscans or Lombards,” the scared one then resumed, “I will make them come. But let the Malebranche stand back somewhat, so that they may not dread their vengeance; and I, sitting where I sit, for one that I am, will make seven come by whistling, as our habit is to do when one of us getteth out.” Hearing these words, Cagnazzo raised his snout, tossing his head, and said: “Hark to the crafty trick he hath devised that he may dive below.” Whereat the other, who had great store of cunning devices, made answer: “Too crafty indeed I am, in bringing deeper torments on my comrades.” Alichino could not restrain himself, and gainsaying all the rest, he said to him: “If thou goest below, I will not chase thee at a gallop, but flap my wings above the pitch. Leave the high

ground, and let the bank be a screen, that we may see if thou alone art able for us all."

Reader, of new sport shalt thou hear. Each of them turned his eyes towards the other side, he being the first who was least prepared to do it. Well chose the Navarrese his opportunity; he steadied his feet upon the ground, and in a moment leaped and freed himself from their designs. Whereupon they each were suddenly stung to the quick, but he the most, who was the cause of their miscarriage: wherefore he rose and shouted: "Thou art caught!" But little it availed, for wings could not outspeed the dread of harm.

The other went below; and he, turning his breast aloft, flew off. Not otherwise doth the duck dive quickly down, what time the falcon draweth near; and he cometh up crestfallen and in anger.

Calcabrina, maddened at the trick, kept close behind him in his flight, longing that the other should get off, for a quarrel's sake. And as the barrator vanished from their sight, he straightway turned his talons on his comrade, and grappled with him above the moat. But the other showed himself a sturdy sparrow-hawk in clawing him, and both fell plump into the boiling pool. A sudden separator was the heat; but, for all that, they could not rise, so fast their wings were glued.

Barbariccia, left with his baffled comrades, made

four of them fly off to the other side with all their prongs; and with great speed, this way and that, they hurried down to their appointed place. They thrust their hooks towards the entangled ones, who by this time were scalded under the pitchy scum. And thus engaged* we left them.

* Compare :

“O limed soul, that, struggling to be free,
Art more engag’d.”

“Hamlet,” iii. 3.

CANTO XXIII.



IN silence, alone, and without companions, went we along, the one in front, the other following, even as the Minor Friars go their way. This conflict turned my thoughts to Æsop's fable, where he telleth of the frog and the rat : for *mo* and *issa** are not more alike than one is to the other, if but the ending and beginning be weighed with heedful mind. And as one thought springeth from out another, so was there born from this a second that made the terror twofold which I at first conceived. My thoughts were on this wise : "These demons have been baffled by us, with injury too, and insult of such kind that I believe it sorely galleth them. If anger, then, be heaped upon ill-will, they will come after us more filled with savagery than is a dog towards the hare he seizeth."

I had already felt my every hair to stand on end through terror, and stood gazing intently

* *Mo* (Latin *modo*) and *issa* (*hac ipsa hora*) are still used in Lombardy and Tuscany. They both mean "now."

behind me, when I said: "Master, if with all speed thou dost not hide thyself and me, I dread the Malebranche: they are already on our track: so vivid is my fancy of them, that even now I hear them."

And he made answer: "Were I a mirror-glass, I could not draw more quickly thine outward image to me, than I receive the impress of that within thee. Only this moment thy thoughts came mingling with my own, alike in their nature and their semblance, in such sort that from both I have made one resolve. If it so be that the incline upon the right doth slope so as to allow our going down to the next chasm, we shall escape the chase thy fancy pictureth."

Scarce had he made an end of disclosing his resolution, when I beheld them coming with outstretched wings, no distance off, intent on seizing us. Quickly my Guide caught me up, even as a mother that is awakened by a noise, and seeth close beside her the kindling flames, that taketh up her child and flieth forth, nor ever pauseth, having so much more care for him than for herself, that but a night-robe is about her. And down from the shoulder of the stony steep, upon his back he slid along the shelving rock, that closeth one side of the neighbour chasm. Never more swiftly through a channel did water glide, to turn a land-mill's wheel, what time it draweth nearest to the paddles, than did my Master along

that slope, bearing me on his breast as though I were his son and not his comrade.

Scarce were his feet upon the bed of the depth below, when the demons were on the eminence above us; but he knew never a thought of harm; for the high Providence whose will it was to set them as warders of the fifth abyss, deprived them all of any power to leave it.

Down in it we came upon a painted tribe, that kept going round with steps exceeding slow, uttering lamentations, and in appearance jaded and crushed in spirit. They carried cloaks with cowls down on their eyes, and wrought in the shape that they make for the monks in Cologne. On the surface they are gilded, even to dazzling; but lined throughout with lead, and of such weight, that those which Frederick made men wear were light as straw. O ever-wearying robe! We turned us once again, still to the left, going as they went, and wholly taken with their sad complaining: but the jaded souls came on so slowly by reason of the weight, that every step we moved our company was new. Wherefore I said unto my Guide: "Find someone who may be known by deed or name, and even as we go move thine eyes about." And one who understood the Tuscan speech cried out behind us: "Stay your feet, ye that speed so swiftly through the dusky air: peradventure thou mayst learn from me that which thou lookest for."

Whereupon my Guide turned him round, and

spake: "Halt, and then go forward at his pace." I stopped, and saw two by their looks display much eagerness of mind to join me; but load and narrow way retarded them.

When they came up, long while they gazed at me with sidelong glance, albeit with never a word. Then turned they to one another and spake amongst themselves: "He seemeth, by the movement of his throat, to be alive: and if they have tasted death, what privilege alloweth them to go uncovered by the weighty gown?" Then they bespake me: "O Tuscan, that art come to the gathering-place of mourning hypocrites, disdain not thou to tell us who thou art." And I made answer to them: "By Arno's beauteous stream, in the great city, I was born and grew, and have not left the body which all along was mine. But who are ye, adown whose cheeks such copious tears as I behold are coursing? And what the torment that is upon you, which gleameth so?"

And one made answer to me: "The orange hoods are lined so thick with lead, that the weight causeth their scales to creak even as they do. Merry Friars we were, and Bolognese; I called by name Catalano, and he Loderingo; and by thy city chosen at one time, as only one is taken, as a rule, to guard its peace; and we were such, that traces of our ways may still be found around Gardingo."

I began: "O Friars, the ill ye wrought——" but more I said not, for there met my eyes one

crucified with three stakes to the earth. When he beheld me, he writhed in every limb, puffing and sighing into his beard. And the friar Catalano, who noticed what he did, said to me: "That pierced one on whom thou gazest, counselled the Pharisees that it was meet to put one man to torture for the people. Athwart the way and naked he lieth on the road, as thou seest, and cannot choose but feel, or ever they go by, the weight of all who pass. And in no different fashion his father-in-law is stretched in this gullet, and all who formed that Council, which was a fountain-head of evil for the Jews."

Then saw I Virgil standing in wonderment above the one that was racked with such indignity upon the cross in the exile that hath no ending.

Then he bespake the friar in words like these: "Disdain not, if so it be allowed thee, to tell us if any opening lieth to the right by which we both may get from hence, without compelling some of the black angels to come and rescue us from this depth."

Then he made answer: "Nearer than thou dost hope, there is a rock that jutteth from the great encircling wall, and passeth bridgewise over all the vales of torture, save that in this one it is broken, and doth not span it. Ye may go up by the broken fragments which lie against the side, and are heaped up at the bottom."

My Guide stood awhile with head bent low, then

said: "He told us falsely what we wished to know, he that spiketh the sinners yonder." And the friar said: "Oft at Bologna have I heard ere now the Devil's vices told, and amongst them, that he is a liar and the father of falsehood."

And then my Guide passed on with hurried strides, somewhat disturbed with anger as he seemed; so I betook me from the heavy-laden ones, following the prints of his dear feet.

CANTO XXIV.



IN that season of the opening year, when the sun doth warm his rays beneath Aquarius, and nights are already on the wane when half the day is past;* when the hoar frost on earth doth counterfeit its snowy sister's image, though short while endureth the fashion of its feathery form :† the cottager whose store of fodder is running low, riseth and looketh forth, and seeth the land all white; whereat he smiteth upon his thigh: he turneth again into his house, and goeth hither and thither complaining, like a wretch that knoweth not what to do: then cometh he forth

* The day was reckoned from sunset to sunset.

† I cannot bring myself to agree with the many commentators who in this somewhat difficult passage take "penna" to mean "pen," with the objects of extending in a fanciful direction the idea supposed to be contained in "asemptra." The use of "penna" in the wider sense in which I have translated it is not without justification. Compare :

"E prima poi ribatter gli convenne
Li duo serpenti avvolti con la verga,
Che riavesse le maschili *penne*."—Inf. xx. 43.

And

"Diss' ei movendo quell' oneste *piume*"
(Of Cato's white beard).—Purg. i. 42.

again, and is filled with hope, beholding how the world hath quickly changed its face ; and taketh up his staff and driveth forth his flocks to pasture. Even in such wise did my Master cause me to droop in spirit, what time I saw his brows grow troubled so ; and even with such-like speed came the plaster to the wound. For soon as we had reached the shattered bridge, my Guide turned him towards me with that gentle look which I had first beheld at the mountain's base. He opened wide his arms, after some resolution come to in his mind, first gazing fixedly at the broken fragments, and caught me up. And as one who worketh and pondereth, who seemeth ever to forestall events ; so he, the while he raised me up towards the top of one rocky ledge, kept his eye upon another jag, saying : " Up over this one clamber next, but first try whether it be such that it will bear thy weight."

It was no road for one encumbered with a cloak, for we had hardly power to make our way aloft from jutting crag to crag, light though he was, and I pushed upwards. And were it not that within this enclosure the steep was shorter than in the other, I know not about him, but I full surely had been overcome. But because Malabolge doth all slope towards the entrance of the lowermost gorge, each valley is so ordered in its nature, that one side riseth and the other goeth down. Nevertheless we came at last to the spot from where the outmost rock is wrenched away.

The breath was so exhausted from my lungs, when I was on the summit, that further power I had none, but to seat me the moment I had reached it.

“’Tis thus that thou must now shake thyself free from sloth,” my Master said, “for seated on down, or under coverlet, man cometh not to fame; unattended by which whoso doth spend his days, leaveth such traces of himself on earth, as smoke in air or foam on water: wherefore bestir thyself; conquer thy weariness with the courageous soul that conquereth in every fight, if it so be that it is not dragged down by the body’s weight. A longer ladder must yet be climbed: it is not yet enough to have escaped from these: if thou dost take my meaning, be now thy deeds such that they may profit thee.”

Then I arose, with show of better store of breath than what I felt possessed of, and said: “Proceed, for I am strong and full of spirit.”

Up the cliff we took our way, all rocky, narrow and difficult as it was, and steeper far withal than that we had ascended. I spoke as I went on, that I might not seem faint; whereat a voice came up from the next abyss, but ill adapted for articulate words. I know not what it said, although I was already on the ridge of the arch that spans the place: but he that spake seemed to be stirred to wrath. I had turned downwards; but living eyes could not penetrate to the depths by reason of the darkness: wherefore I said: “Master, make thy

way to the other ring, and let us go down the bastion: for as I hear from where I am and fail to understand, so do I see below but can no shape distinguish."

"Other answer than performance," he said, "I give thee none: for fair request should be attended by action without words."

Down the bridge we came, by its extremity, where it is joined with the eighth ridge, and then was the chasm laid open before me: and in it I beheld a noisome swarm of snakes, and so outlandish in appearance, that even now the recollection maketh my blood to curdle. Let Libya vaunt no longer with its sand; for though it breedeth Chelydri, Jaculi and Phareæ, and Cenchres and Amphisbæna, plagues never yet so many or so baneful did it show, with all the Ethiopæ's land to boot, and that which lieth by the Red Sea.

Amidst this savage and most gruesome crowd, people were hurrying naked and in terror, with never a hope of hiding-place or heliotrope. They had their hands bound fast with snakes behind them, which pierced their loins with head and tail, and were fastened into knots in front. And lo! on one who was beside us, a serpent sprang, that pierced him through just where the neck and shoulders join. Nor "O" nor "I" was ever penned so speedily as he burst into flame, and burnt, and fell perforce a mass of ashes. And when that he was thus laid shapeless on the

ground, again the ashes gathered themselves together, and of themselves re-formed at once into the self-same creature.

Even so, great poets tell us, the Phoenix dieth, and springeth to birth again, when it cometh to the five-hundredth year. Nor herb nor grain doth it consume in its life, but only tears of incense and of spice : and nard and myrrh are its last ceremonies.

And even as one that falleth, and knoweth not how, through influence of Demon that beareth him to earth, or other wasting power that crippleth man ; who, rising, looketh around him in amazement, all bewildered by the appalling affliction that hath come upon him, and gazing sigheth : such was the sinner after he had risen. O power of God, how terrible it is ! that doth inflict such strokes by way of vengeance !

My guide then asked him who he was ; where-upon he made reply : " 'Tis but a little while ago since I came down from Tuscany, falling like the rain into this savage gorge. Brute life, not human, was my delight, mule that I was : I am Vanni Fucci, a beast, and Pistoia was a lair well worthy of me."

And I said to my Guide : " Bid him not to go, and ask what sin it was that drave him down here, for ere now have I seen him a man of blood and wrath."

And the sinner, who understood, made no pretence, but with his thoughts and eyes upon me,

grew all suffused with a pitiable blush of shame. Then spake he: "That thou hast found me in the misery wherein thou dost behold me, giveth me deeper pain than the moment when I was taken from the other life. I cannot deny thee what thou askest: I am thrust down so far, for that I stole from out the sacristy its goodly garniture; and falsely ere to-day was the blame laid at another's door. But that thou mayst not revel at such sight, if thou shouldst ever get from out the shadowy domains, open thine ears to my prediction, and hear: Pistoia is first drained of the Neri; then Florence setteth up anew her people and her rule. From Val di Magra Mars bringeth down his war-cloud, which is enwrapt in darksome vapours, and with the whirlwind's angry rush, upon Piceno's plain the fight must needs be fought: whence suddenly it will scatter the mist, in such sort that every Bianco shall be smitten by it: and I have spoken this, that it may grieve thee sore."

CANTO XXV.



His words came to an end, the thief held both his hands aloft with scornful gesture,* the while he cried aloud: "Take it, God, for it is at Thee I aim it."

From thenceforth were the snakes my friends, for at that moment one of them entwined himself about his neck, as if to say, "'Tis not my will that thou shouldst utter more;" and another about his arms, that bound him fast, riveting itself in front so firmly that he had never power to give a stir. Ah, Pistoia, Pistoia, wherefore dost thou not resolve to burn thyself to ashes, that thou mayest endure no longer, since in evil-doing thou dost outstrip thy seed? Through all Hell's darksome circles, I saw no spirit so arrogant against God; not even him who fell at Thebes down from the walls.

He fled away, nor spake he another word. And I beheld a Centaur, filled with fury, come shouting: "Where, where is he of the bitter tongue?" I do

* Lit., "with both the figs."

not think that all Maremma doth contain so many reptiles as he had on his haunch, up to where man's form beginneth. Upon his shoulders, close behind his head, there crouched on him a dragon with wings widespread, that sets on fire all whom he meets.

My Master said: "This is Cacus, who underneath the rocky base of Mount Aventine hath made full many a time a lake of blood. He travelleth not the same road as his comrades because of the fraudulent pillage he accomplished of the huge herd that were his neighbours': and for this reason were his crooked deeds brought to an end under the club of Hercules, who peradventure gave him an hundred strokes, yet never felt he ten."

Whilst thus he spake, the other went by, and under us three shades approached, of whose presence neither my Guide nor I were aware before they cried aloud: "Who are ye?" Whereupon our discourse brake off, and to them only did we then turn our thoughts. I could not recognise them; but it happened, as often by some chance it happens, that one had need to name another, saying: "Where did Cianfa lurk?" Wherefore I raised my finger to my chin and nose, in order that my Guide might stand and listen.

If, Reader, thou art now slow to believe what I shall tell thee, it were no thing to wonder at, for I that saw it can scarce admit its truth. Whilst I kept staring at them, open-eyed, behold! a snake, six-footed, springs out in front of one of them, and

throws itself full upon him. With its middle feet it clutched his belly, and with its fore-feet seized his arms; then drave its fangs deep into both his cheeks. Over his thighs it stretched its hindmost feet, and right through both it thrust its tail, and curled it upwards along his loins behind. Never to tree did ivy cling so closely, as the foul beast entwined his limbs about the other's: then grew they into one, as though they had been made of melting wax, and fused their colours: nor one, nor other, any longer seemed that which it was: just as before a flame the brown hue moveth onward on a piece of paper, which is not black as yet, though the white fadeth.

The other two stood gazing, and each cried out: "Ah me! Agnello, how dost thou change! Lo! thou art now no longer two, but one."

Ere this the two heads had become one; when two shapes appeared to us commingled in one form, where two had ceased to be. Of two strips were there made two arms; the thighs and legs, the belly and the chest, were fashioned into limbs such as were never looked upon. All trace of former semblance was blotted out in them. Both, and yet neither, did the disnatured image seem, and so it passed away with tardy step.

And as the lizard under the Dog-day's mighty heat, moving from hedge to hedge, seemeth a flash of lightning if it cross the way; even so, as it came towards the bellies of the other two, did a flaming snake appear, dun and swarthy as a

peppercorn. And through that part, in one of them, from whence is first derived our sustenance, it darted; then fell to earth outstretched in front of him. He that was transfixed gazed on it, and spake no word; but yawned, with firm-set feet, as though drowsiness or fever had come upon him. He eyed the reptile, and the reptile him: one from his gaping wound, and from his mouth the other, belched forth thick smoke, and their smoke joining met. Let Lucan now be mute, where he tells the tale of vexed Sabellus and Nasidius; and let him pause to hear that which is now unfolded. Of Cadmus and Arethusa be Ovid mute; for if he in his tuneful strain changeth the one into a reptile, the other into a brook, he moveth not my envy: for never did he so transmute two natures face to face, in such sort that both their forms were quick to interchange their substance. Change for change, they took each other's shape, and in such wise, that the reptile severed its tail into a fork, and he that was transfixed closed up his feet together. Legs and thighs so grew to one another, that in a little space the juncture left never a sign that showed itself. The cloven tail assumed the form which vanished in the other; its skin grew soft, and the other's hard. I saw the arms sink into the arm-pits, and the two feet of the beast, which were short, extend to the length by which the others were curtailed. Next the hind-feet, entwined together, became the member which man con-

cealeth, while the tortured creature had two drawn out from his.

Whilst the smoke is mantling the one and the other in an unwonted hue, and causeth hair to sprout on one part, and peels it from the other; one raised himself erect, and the other fell to earth; yet shifting none the more for that the anger-flashing eyes, beneath which each of them had changed his face. He that was upright had his drawn towards the temples; and of the super-abundant flesh which thither made its way, came ears to sprout up from the hairless jaws. The part that moved not backwards, and held its place, formed on the face a nose, and thickened into lips of fitting size. He that lay stretched, shooteth out a snout in front, and draweth his ears into his head, even as the snail its horns; and his tongue, which erewhile was unsevered, and apt for utterance, parteth in twain; while in the other the forked tongue closeth up, and the smoke ceaseth.

The soul that had become a beast speedeth away, hissing through the vale, and close behind it the other, sputtering in its speech. Then turned he his new-found shoulders towards it, and to the other saith: "Fain would I see Buoso haste, as I have done, on hands and knees along this road."

So saw I change and change again the loathsome mob that fills the seventh circle; and if my pen swerve from its course, strangeness must be

my plea. And though mine eyes were in a measure dazed, and my sense distraught, yet could they not so hide them as they fled, but that I did detect Puccio Sciancato; and, of the three companions who came at first, he was the only one that knew no change: the other was he for whom thy tears, Gaville, flow.

CANTO XXVI.



LORENCE, be glad of heart, for thou art grown so great, that thou beatest thy wings over sea and land, and wide through Hell is thy name spread. Amongst the robbers, five such I found, and burgesses of thine; whereat shame cometh on me, and to no mighty honour dost thou rise thereby. But if it be that dreams are true upon the threshold of the morn, or ever a little time be past thou wilt be taught what even Prato, not to say another, would fain see come upon thee. And were it even now, it were none too soon. Would that it so might be, as surely it must be; for it will weigh upon me more, the more my days advance.

We passed from thence; and up the steps, with which the jutting rocks had furnished us before in our descent, my guide again ascended, and drew me after him. And following the lonesome path, through the crags and through the splinters of the cliff, the foot unaided by the hand had made no progress.

Then sorrow came upon me, and sorrow cometh

on me now afresh, when I direct my thoughts to what I saw; and more than is my wont I curb my power of mind, to stay its wandering into ways where virtue may not lead it: so that, if either favouring star or higher power have vouchsafed aught of good unto me, I may not grudge myself its use.

Many as the fire-flies which the peasant, at rest upon the hill, seeth beneath him in the valley, where it may be he tilleth and gathereth his grapes, in the season when he that lighteth up the world holdeth his face least hidden from us, what time the fly giveth place unto the gnat: so many were the flames with which the eighth abyss was all ablaze, as I was made aware so soon as I was come to where the depth disclosed itself. And even as he for whom the bears wreaked vengeance, beheld Elijah's chariot as it moved away, what time the rearing steeds uplifted them towards Heaven; for with his eyes he had no power to follow, so as to see aught else save only flame, mounting aloft, like to a tiny cloud: in such wise did each flame move along the gorge of the abyss, that none revealed that which was hid within it, and every flame enwraps a sinner.

I stood tiptoe so high upon the bridge to see, that had I not seized hold upon a jutting rock, I should have fallen below with no enforcement.*

* Shakespeare, "Henry IV.," Part II., i. 1:

"And as the thing that's heavy in itself,

Upon enforcement flies with greater speed."

And my Guide, who saw me thus intent, said :
“ The spirits are within the fires : each one is
mantled with what consumeth him.” “ My Mas-
ter,” I made answer, “ now that I hear thee I am
more assured ; but already I was persuaded that
it was even so, and already was I minded to say
to thee : Who is he in yonder fire that cometh so
divided at the crest, that it would seem as though
it rose from out the pyre where Eteocles was laid
beside his brother ?”

He answered me : “ Within it there, Ulysses
and Diomede are tortured : and as erewhile in sin,
so speed they now in punishment together. And
in their flame they are bemoaning the ambush of
the Horse, that made the gate through which
came forth the Romans' noble seed. Within it
do they lament the stratagem, through which,
even after death, Deidamia sorroweth for Achilles ;
and there must they endure their punishment for
the Palladium.

“ Master,” I said, “ if they have power to speak
within these fires, I pray thee earnestly, and urge
my prayer again, that it may be even as a thousand
prayers, that thou wilt not deny me leave to wait
until the horned flame come near : thou seest that
I am bent on it with yearning.” And he made
answer to me : “ Thy prayer is worthy of much
praise, and therefore I allow it ; but let thy tongue
be curbed. Leave speech to me ; for I have
gathered that thou dost desire ; and, inasmuch as

they were Greeks, it may be they would scorn thy words."

After that the flame was come to where my Guide thought time and place were fitting, in such words did I hear him speak: "Ye, that are two within a single flame, if I have wrought you service while I lived, if I have wrought you service, much or little, when in the world above I penned my lofty strain, stay ye awhile; and one of you declare, where was the place where, having lost his course, he went to die."

The taller horn of the old flame commenced to tremble, muttering, even as a flame which the wind bloweth to and fro; then swaying to each side its topmost point, as though it were the tongue that spake, sent its voice from within, and said: "When I took leave of Circe, she that for more than a year detained me there hard by Gaeta, or ever Æneas had named it by that name; neither affection for my boy, nor reverence for an aged sire, nor even the debt of love that should have filled Penelope with gladness, had power to quell within me the yearning I had nourished to win experience of the world, men's vices and their worth. Into the deep and open sea I launched, with never ship but one, and that poor remnant of my company that had not fled from me. Both shores I saw, as far as Spain, as far too as Morocco, and the Sardinians' isle, and all the other isles bathed by that sea. Stricken with years and slow, were I and my companions, when we came

to that narrow strait, where Hercules set up his landmarks, to warn mankind that they should pass no farther. Seville I left on the right; on the other hand I had already left Ceuta. 'Brothers,' I said, 'who through an hundred thousand dangers have reached the region of the setting sun, to the poor paltry watch that still remaineth of your senses, consent not to deny the knowledge of the land behind the sun, where no man dwelleth. Bethink you of your birth: ye were not made to live the life of brutes, but to obey the call of valour and of knowledge.'

"With such brief speech I made my comrades so eager for the voyage, that I could hardly then have held them back; and turning our stern towards the morning, of our oars we made us wings for our foolhardy flight, steering ever to the left. At night I had already looked upon all the stars of the other hemisphere, and ours dipped down so low, that it showed not above the Ocean's level. Five times beneath the moon was the light kindled, and quenched as many times, since we had passed within the perilous strait,* when a mountain loomed on our sight, dun with distance, and higher did it seem to me, than any I had ever looked upon. Our hearts were filled with gladness, but soon it turned to sorrow; for from the new-found land a storm sprang up, and shattered our vessel's prow. Three times did it make her

* *I.e.*, the present Straits of Gibraltar.

whirl around with all its strength of waters; at the fourth it drave the poop aloft, and forced the bow to sink, as was God's will, until the billows closed again above us."

CANTO XXVII.



NOW was the flame erect, and without stir, for it had ceased to speak ; and now it passed away from us, with the permission of the gentle Poet ; when another that came behind it caused us to turn our eyes towards the crest, because of a confused sound that came forth from it.

As the Sicilian bull (that bellowed first—and rightly too—with the groans of him whose file had fashioned it) bellowed with the voice of him who was being tortured ; so that, albeit of brass, it seemed deep-pierced with agony ; even so, for that at first, while in the fire, they had neither avenue nor outlet, the mutterings of lamentation were transformed into its own tones. But after they had won their way up through the point, giving to it the tremor the tongue had given them in their going forth, we heard it say : “ O thou to whom I direct my voice, and who even now didst speak in Lombard accents, saying, ‘ Betake thee now away, I do not urge thee more ’ ; albeit my

coming has peradventure been a little late, be it not galling to thee to stay and speak with me: thou seest it galleth me not, and I am burning. If it be that thou art newly fallen into this sightless world from out that pleasant Latian land, whence I come laden with the full burden of my sins, tell me if the Romagnuols are at peace or war; for I was from the mountains there, between Urbino and the peak where Tiber's fountain is unloosed."

I was still bowed low and listening, when my Guide touched my side, saying: "Speak thou; this one is Latian-born."

And I, who had ere then my answer ready, straightway began to speak: "Spirit, that art concealed beneath, thy native land Romagna neither is, nor was she ever, without war in the hearts of her rulers; but open war amongst them I left none now. Ravenna standeth as she hath stood for many a year: the eagle of Polenta sitteth brooding there, so that it overshadoweth Cervia with its wings. The city that in other days braved the long trial, and piled a gory heap of Frenchmen, is once again under the claws of green. And the mastiffs of Verrucchio, old and young, that wrought the spoiling of Montagna, are boring with their teeth there where their habit was. The Lion cub of the white den, that changeth sides from summer-time to winter, leadeth the cities on the Lamone and Santerno; and the city whose walls the Savio laves, even as it

lieth betwixt the highlands and the plain, so betwixt tyranny and freedom doth it spend its days. And now I do entreat thee, tell us who thou art ; be not more obdurate than others were ; so may thy name maintain on earth its place of pride."

When that the fire had roared awhile, as was its wont, to and fro it waved its pointed crest, and then blew forth these words : " Could I believe my answer were to one who would ever return to the world, this flame should stand for ever motionless ; but since none ever hath returned alive from out this gorge, if it be truth I hear, fearless of infamy I make my answer to thee.

" I was a soldier, and then a monk of the Cord, fancying, girded thus, to make atonement : and of a verity my fancy had been fulfilled, were it not for the High Priest, whom ill betide ! who led my steps again to my old sins ; and how, and wherefore, I would fain have you hear. Whilst I was still a form of flesh and bone, the which my mother gave me, my deeds were not those of the lion, but of the fox. Wiles and secret ways, I knew them all ; and to such purpose plied their arts, that it was noised abroad even to the earth's end. When I saw that I was come to that period of my days, when it behoveth man to lower sail and coil the ropes together, that which erewhile was pleasant in my sight, brought galling then. I gave myself to repentance and confession ; alas, unhappy me ! and that would have availed me.

The Chief of the new Pharisees—at war close by the Lateran, and not with Saracens, not with Jews; for never enemy of his but was a Christian, and never one of them had been to conquer Acre, nor served as merchant in the Soldan's land—knew naught of reverence for highest office and priestly orders in himself, nor aught in me for the Girdle which was wont to make its wearers more spare of flesh. But even as Constantine summoned Silvestro from the hollows of Soracte to cure him of his leprosy, so he there summoned me as his physician to cure the fever of his arrogance: he bade me give him counsel; and I was mute, because his words seemed drunken. And then he said to me: 'Let not thy heart dream aught of harm: even now do I assoilzie thee, and do thou teach me so to act that I may drag Penestrino to the ground. 'Tis mine, as thou dost know, to lock and unlock Heaven; for the keys are two, by which my predecessor set little store.' And so his weighty reasoning drave me to that point where I felt that to hold my peace was worst; and I said: 'Father, since thou dost grant me pardon for that sin to which I cannot choose but sink, unending promise, with scant fulfilment, will win the day for thee in thy high seat.'

"When I was dead, Saint Francis came for me; but one of the black Cherubim said unto him, 'Bear him not away; wrong me not. He needs must come below amongst my thralls, for that he gave the treacherous counsel, since which,

even to this day, I have kept fast by his hair : for absolution there is none for him that knoweth not repentance ; nor can man at one time yearn for and sorrow for his sin, for contradiction suffereth it not.' O miserable me ! how I shuddered when he laid hold of me, saying to me : 'Thou didst not deem perchance that I was a logician !'

"He bore me away to Minos; and eight times he wound his tail around his stubborn back ; and after that he had bitten it in great rage, he said : 'This one must join the sinners meet for the thieving fire': wherefore, here where thou seest, am I undone ; and thus attired, my torment rankles as I go."

When he had thus made an end of his speech, the flame passed sorrowing away, writhing and tossing to and fro its pointed horn. We moved along, I and my Guide, over the crag, up to the other arch that overhangeth the gorge wherein the penalty is paid by those whose burden cometh to them by sowing discord.

CANTO XXVIII.



HO could in full describe, even with unshackled words, the blood and wounds that I now saw, often though he told the tale? Surely no tongue there is but would come short of it, because of our speech and comprehension, whose wit is all too weak to grasp so much. If once again the mighty host could be gathered together, that erewhile on Appulia's fateful plain wept for their blood, shed by the Roman; and in the long protracted war which heaped such mighty spoil of rings, as Livy writes, who erreth not: together with the host that in their struggle with Robert Guiscard were made to feel the dole of blows: and furthermore, that host whose bones are even to this day piled up at Ceperano, where each Appulian played the traitor; and there, too, hard by Tagliacozzo, where without arms the aged Alardo won the day: and one should show his mangled limb, another his lopped off; it were yet nought beside the gruesome fashion of the ninth circle.

Never was cask so rent, through loss of stave or bottom, as one whom I beheld cleft from chin to breach. His entrails hung betwixt his legs; the pluck was laid all bare, and the foul pouch that turneth into excrement that which is swallowed. Whilst I was wholly taken up in gazing on him, he turned his eyes on me, and with his hands he opened out his breast, the while he spake: "Mark now how I rend myself; mark how mangled Mahomet is. Before me goeth Ali wailing, his face split down from forelock to the chin; and all the others on whom thou lookest here, were in their lives spreaders of scandal and of schism, and this is why we are so cleft. A demon is behind us here, that gasheth us in such cruel fashion, making each member of this herd time after time come under his sword's edge, when we have made the circle of the road of sorrow; for our wounds close up or ever any one of us cometh again before him. But who art thou that ponderest upon the crag, perchance to stay awhile thy going to the doom that hath been passed upon the charge thy self hast laid against thee?"

"Death hath not come to him as yet, nor doth sin lead him," my Master answered, "to torment him; but it is mine, dead though I be, to lead him from circle unto circle down through Hell, that his experience may be full: and this is even true, as that I speak to thee."

More than an hundred were there who, when

they heard him, stood still to gaze upon me in the gorge, forgetful of their tortures in their wonder.

“Go, thou that peradventure will look ere long upon the sun, tell Fra Dolcino, an it so be he careth not to follow me with speed down here, to arm him with such store of provender, that stress of snow may fail to bring victory to the Novarese, which otherwise it were no light thing to achieve.” These words Mahomet said to me, after that he had raised one foot to move away; then planted it upon the ground to go.

Another one, whose throat was pierced from side to side, who had his nose cut off up to the eyebrows, and but a single ear, halting to gaze in wonder with the others, before the others opened out his windpipe, which was all red without, and spake: “O thou, whom sin condemneth not, and whom ere now I have beheld on Latian ground—if strong resemblance do not play me false—call Pier da Medicina to thy mind, if ever thou dost return to look upon the pleasant plains that from Vercelli slope to Mercabò. And tell the two best citizens of Fano, Dan Guido and Angioiello too, that if our power here to read the future be not vain, they shall be hurled from out their ship and foully drowned near Cattolica, through a base tyrant’s treachery. Never yet did Neptune see a crime so fell, from Cyprus’ isle to Majorca, wrought by the hands of pirates, or the Argive race. That traitor who seeth but with one eye, and dwelleth in the land on which one with me

here would fain he had never looked, will make them come to parley with him: then will his acts be such, that they shall need not vow nor prayer to fend them from Focara's wind."

And I made answer to him: "Expound and make clear to me, if thy wish it be, that I should carry tidings of thee to the world above, who is he whose eyes beheld the unwelcome sight?"

Then laid he his hand upon the jaw of one of his companions, and opened his mouth, the while he cried aloud: "This here is he, and he speaketh not; this outcast laid to rest the doubt in Cæsar, asserting that the man who is forearmed can never brook delay but to his cost." Oh! in what wild dismay did Curio seem to me, his tongue slit in his throat, he that was once so bold of speech!

And one that had both hands lopped off, raising the stumps aloft in the murky air, so that the blood besmeared his face, cried out: "Thou wilt remember Mosca too, who said, ah me! 'A deed is crowned when done'; which was the Tuscan people's seed of evil."

"And ruin to thy kin," I added: whereat, overwhelmed in deepening agony, he passed away, like one beside himself and sorrow-smitten. But I stood fast to view the troop, and saw a thing which, without other proof, I should fear to tell alone: were it not that conscience doth reassure me, the kindly comrade that giveth strength to man, when armed with the breastplate of conscious purity.

Of a truth I saw—and even now methinks I see it—a headless body pass, even as the others went in that sorrow-stricken crowd. It held the severed head by its locks, even as a lantern, swinging with every movement of the hand; and it looked wonderingly at us, and said: “Ah me!” Of itself it made a lamp for itself; and they were two in one, and one in two; how it may be, He knoweth who so ordaineth.

When he was come directly under the bridge, he lifted high his arm, with the whole head, to bring its words close to us, and they were: “Look now upon the racking torture, thou that, possessed of breath, comest to gaze upon the dead: see if there be any so terrible as this. And that thou mayest bear tidings of me, know that I am Bertram de Born, he who supplied the Boy King with the evil counsels. Father and son I stirred into rebellion against each other: Achitophel wrought never more on Absalom and David with his malignant instigations. For that I put asunder those who were so united, I wear my brain, woe is me! sundered from its source which dwelleth in this headless body. And thus is retribution’s law made manifest in me.”

CANTO XXIX.



HE crowding people and the ever-varying wounds had made my eyes to reel so, that they were fain to rest and weep. But Virgil said to me: "On what art thou still gazing? Why clingeth thy vision still down there amongst the sad and mangled spirits? Such was not thy way in the other chasms; bear in mind, if thou dost think to number them, that the whole circle of the valley is two-and-twenty miles; and the moon is already beneath our feet. The time that is allowed us is now short, and there is more to see than that thou seest."

"Hadst thou," I then made answer to him, "bethought thee of the cause through which I gazed, thou wouldst peradventure have permitted me to tarry yet awhile." Meantime my Guide moved on, and I went after him, even as I made my answer to him, and adding further: "Within the cavern upon whose depths I held my eyes so riveted, I am persuaded that a spirit of my own blood is wailing the sin for which such heavy reckoning is paid down yonder."

Then said my Master: "Let not thy thoughts from this time forth be troubled about him: let thy mind dwell on other things, and there let him abide; for I saw him, at the base of the little bridge, point at thee, and violently threaten with his finger, and heard them calling him Geri del Bello. Thou wast just then so wholly engrossed on him who of old held Altaforte, that thou didst not look that way, until he had departed.

"My Guide," I said, "his cruel death, for which no vengeance hath been wrought for him by any of the comrades of his shame, filled him with disdain; and for this reason, as I suppose, he passed away without addressing me; and in that he hath the more moved my compassion for him."

So spake we until we came to the first place that from the craggy ledge gives a view of the valley beyond, down to its very depth, were there but more light there. When we had reached the utmost cloister of Malebolge, so that its brotherhood were well within our ken, there struck upon mine ear the sound of many lamentations, whose shafts were barbed with pity; whereat I hid mine ears within my hands.

Such tribulation as would be, if all the ills of Valdichiana's hospitals, from July to September, Maremma's too, and eke Sardinia's, were gathered in one pit; even such was it there; and there arose a stench thereout, such as is wont to rise from gangrened limbs.

Downwards we went to the last rampart of the

long cliff, keeping continuously to the left; and then I could see more clearly down to the depths, where the High Father's hand-maiden, unerring Justice, meteth out punishment on the forgers whom she enrolleth in the book of doom on earth. I do not think that in Egina it was a deeper sorrow to see the people all plague-stricken, what time the air was laden so with pestilence that every living thing, even to the tiny worm, dropped down—and afterwards the ancient races, as poets hold for truth, were re-established from the seed of ants—than it was to behold the spirits wasting in heap upon heap throughout that darksome valley. One on the belly, another on the shoulders, they lay upon each other, and another crawling moved from place to place along the miserable way. With tardy steps we went, uttering no word, looking upon and listening to the sick who had no strength to raise their bodies. Two I saw sitting, propped one against the other, as dish is propped against dish for warming, covered from head to foot with scabby spots. And never saw I currycomb plied by groom for whom his master waiteth, nor by one kept waking sore against his will, as each of them plied quick his rasping nails upon himself, under the raging violence of the itch, that knoweth no other appeasing. And their nails stripped the scabs from off them, even as doth a knife the scales from a bream or other fish that hath them larger.

“O thou!” began my Guide to one of them,

“that tearest thyself with thy fingers, and makest pincers of them for the nonce; tell me if there be any Latian-born amongst those that are within; so may thy nails endure for ever for such employment.”

“Latian-born are we, the twain whom thou seest so mutilated here,” one made reply, the while he wept; “but who art thou, that hast inquired of us?”

And my Guide said: “One am I, who with this living man am going down from depth to depth, and I am busied in showing Hell to him.” Thereupon their mutual support came to an end; and they turned them each towards me, trembling, with others who caught the echo of his words.

My gentle Master turned all his thoughts to me, the while he spake: “Say to them all thou wishest.”

And I began, even as he willed me to: “So may your memory not fade from out men’s minds in the first world, but abide for many suns; declare to me who ye are, and of what nation; nor ever let your foul and loathsome sufferings fill you with fear to make you known to me.”

“I was of Arezzo,” the one made answer to me, “and Albergo da Siena got me thrust into the fire; but that for which I died is not what bringeth me here. True it is that I said to him, speaking in jest: ‘I could raise myself to fly through the air;’ and he, possessed as he was of curiosity and little sense, desired that I should show the art to him; and all because I made him not a Dædalus, he burnt me by the hands of one whose son he was

reputed. But Minos, who may not be mistaken, condemned me to the deepest chasm of all the ten, for the alchemy in which I trafficked when on earth."

And I said to the Poet: "Was ever race so vain as the Sienese? Of a verity the French were never nearly so."

Whereat the other leper, who caught my words, made answer to my speech: "Excepting Stricca, who found the way to lavish in moderation; and Niccolò, who first discovered the costly use of the clove, in the garden where all such seed taketh root; excepting, too, the company in which Caccia of Asciano wasted his vineyard and his spacious woods, and Abbagliato showed the wit he had. But that thou mayest learn who it is that thus supports thee in dispraise of the Sienese, bend thine eyes keenly on me, so that my countenance may truly show itself to thee; so shalt thou see that I am the spirit of Capocchio, who with the aid of alchemy abased the metals; and thou must needs remember, if I but rightly scan thy face, how excellent an ape I was of nature."

CANTO XXX.



AT the time when Juno was stirred to wrath because of Semele against the race of Thebes, as she had shown full many a time ere then, Athamas waxed in frenzy so, that, seeing his wife go forth, her two boys in her laden arms, he cried aloud: "Spread wide the nets, that I may take the lioness and her cubs at the pass;" and then stretched he forth his claws that knew no mercy, laying hold of him that bore the name Learchus, and whirled him round, and dashed him against a rock; and she with her other burden drowned herself. And when Fate hurled to earth the Trojan's towering pride, that dared all things, so that at one stroke kingdom and king were brought to naught; unhappy Hecuba, in misery and in chains, when she had looked on Polixena reft of life, and, overwhelmed in grief, was told of Polidorus on the ocean shore, barked in her madness like a dog: to such a degree had sorrow warped her mind. But neither Theban nor Trojan Furies were ever seen more cruel

toward any yet—in goading brutes, much less in goading human limbs—than the two pale and naked spirits whom I beheld, that hurried by, snapping the while, even as the swine doth snap what time he breaketh from the sty. One of them came beside Capocchio, and drave his fangs into the knotty portion of his neck, in such sort that, as he dragged him, he made his belly grate upon the stony ground. And the Aretine, who stood there trembling, said to me: “That airy sprite is Gianni Schicchi; and in mad fashion he goeth round, plaguing his neighbours thus.”

“Oh!” said I to him, “so may the other not drive his fangs into thy flesh, let it not weary thee to tell who it is, or ever it speed hence.”

And he made answer to me: “That is the ancient spirit of sin-soiled Myrrha, who, spurning lawful love, became her father’s mistress. She came to sin so with him, by falsely taking on herself another’s form, even as the other, who goeth away yonder, took on himself in his own person to falsely represent Buoso Donati, making a will and giving it due form, that he might get possession of the lady of the herd.”

And when the two mad spirits had passed away, on whom I had kept my eye, I turned it back to gaze upon the other ill-starred shades. One I beheld made after the fashion of a lute, had he but had the groin cut short where man is forked. The heavy dropsy—which, with the moisture it hath no power to absorb, so wrests

the parts from their own form, that the face no longer matcheth with the paunch—forced him to keep his lips apart, even as one smitten with hectic fever, through stress of thirst, turneth one lip towards the chin and the other upwards.

“O ye! who suffer never a torture, and why I know not, in this world of woe,” he spake to us, “turn your eyes and thoughts to the sad plight of Master Adam. In life I knew no lack of what I wished for, and now, ah me! I yearn for even one drop of water. The brooks, that flow from the green hills of Casentino down to the Arno, cooling and moistening their banks, are ever there before me, and not in vain; for, far beyond the malady that robbeth my face of flesh, their image parcheth me. The unbending Justice, that chastiseth me, borroweth even from the land wherein I sinned, a means to make my sighs more frequent. Yonder is Romèna, where I wrought the false coinage, stamped with the Baptist’s image, for which I had to leave my body burning upon earth. But could I only look on Guido’s wretched soul, or Alexander’s, or their brothers here, I would not give the sight for Branda’s fountain. One of them is even now within, if the frenzied spirits that go their rounds speak truth: but what doth it profit me whose limbs are hampered? If I were only light of foot enough to travel even an inch in an hundred years, I should ere now have started on the way to seek for him amidst this loathsome crowd,

albeit it stretcheth round eleven miles, and is not less than half a mile in width. Through them am I become one of such a household: they, it was, that lured me on to stamp the florins that had three carats of alloy."

And I said unto him: "Who are the wretched pair, that steam like to a moistened hand in winter, that lie close by thee on the right?"

"I found them here," he answered, "when I came down like rain into this hole, and since that day they never gave a turn, nor do I think they ever will through all eternity. One is the faithless woman who laid the charge against Joseph; the other is the faithless Sinon, the Greek from Troy; raging fever it is that maketh them to throw off such loathsome vapour."

And one of them who peradventure took it ill, that he was named thus darkly, with clenched hand struck him on the hardened paunch: it resounded as though it had been a drum; and Master Adam struck him in the face with his arm, that seemed no whit less hard, the while he said to him: "Although I am bereft of power to move, by reason of these heavy limbs, I have an arm unfettered for need like this." Whereat the other made reply: "When thou wert on thy way to the fire, thou hadst it not so ready; but just as ready, and more so, thou hadst it when thou wast forging coin."

The dropsied one made answer: "Thou sayest truth in this; but thou wast not so truthful as

a witness when thou wast questioned of the truth at Troy."

"If I spake false, thou too didst forge false coin," said Sinon: "and I am here for one false act, but thou for more than any other demon."

"Bethink thee of the horse, perjurer," answered he who had the swollen paunch; "and may it plague thee that the whole world wots of it."

"May thy thirst plague thee," said the Greek, "wherewith thy tongue is cracking; the stinking water too that swells thy belly so into a mound before thine eyes."

And then the coiner answered: "Thy jaw doth gape for evil utterance as is its wont; for granted that I thirst, and that I swell with moisture, thou hast the fever heat and aching head; nor wouldst thou wait for many words of invitation to lap Narcissus' mirror."

I was wholly occupied in listening to them, when my Master said to me: "Gaze on in wonderment, but little more is wanted to make me quarrel with thee." Hearing him speak to me in anger, I turned me towards him with shame so deep, that it still haunts my recollection. And even as one that dreameth of his own harm, and in his dreaming wisheth it were a dream, so that he yearns for that which really is, as if it were not; to such state was I come, that, having no power to speak, I longed to make excuse, and made it all the while, nor ever dreamed I did so.

“Less shame,” my Master said, “would expiate a greater fault than thine hath been; wherefore unburden thee of all depression: and bear in mind that I am always at thy side, if ever it should come about again that chance should throw thee where people are engaged in contest of such sort: for wishing to give ear to it is an unworthy wish.”

CANTO XXXI.



HE self-same tongue had wounded me so sore at first, that it sent a blush to both my cheeks, and then brought healing to me. Even so have I heard tell that the spear of Achilles, and of his sire, was wont to be the cause at first of sorrow, then of kindly boon.

We turned our backs upon the vale of sorrowing, faring onwards over the rampart that windeth around it, uttering no word. Here it was less than night and less than day, so that my vision reached but a short way before me : but I heard a mighty horn sounding so loudly that it would have stifled any thunder, which drew mine eyes wholly to one place, following it backwards in the direction from which it came. Orlando never blew so dread a blast, after the tearful rout, when Charlemagne saw his holy emprise perish. I had held my head but a short space turned that way, when I seemed to see a multitude of lofty towers ; wherefore I said : “ Prithee, Master, what town is this ? ”

And he made answer to me : " For that thou gazest into the darkness at too great a distance, it cometh that thou art astray in what thou dost imagine. Clearly shalt thou see, when thou drawest near yon spot, how much the sense is tricked by distance ; wherefore bestir thee somewhat more." And then he took me by the hand lovingly, and said : " Or ever we go further, that the reality may seem less strange to thee, know that they are not towers, but giants ; and they are, one and all, from navel downwards sunk in the pit which goeth about the rampart.

As when the mist is clearing, the eye doth slowly shape again what the air-thickening cloud is hiding : even so, piercing the dim and gathered atmosphere, as we drew near and nearer to the edge, error departed from me, and fear came upon me. And like as Montereccione, above its circling bastions, is crowned with towers, so did these fearful giants—whom Jove still threatens when it thunders—with their half-bodies form towers upon the mound that goeth around the pit. And already I could discern the face of one of them, his shoulders too, and breast, and a great part of his belly, and both arms down along his sides. Nature, I trow, when she gave up the art of rearing living things so fashioned, did well to withhold such ministers from Mars. And if she knoweth no regret for creating elephants and whales, he who considereth it curiously, will hold her all the wiser and more just for doing so ; for where the force of intellect

is joined to evil will, and power to do such will, mankind is helpless to find resource against it.

His face seemed to me as long and huge as St. Peter's pine at Rome; and matching well therewith were his other bones. So that the rampart which served him as an apron from the middle down, still left so great a space of him exposed above, that three Frieslanders would boast in vain that they could reach his hair: for I could see full thirty palms of him, downwards from where man fasteneth his mantle. "Rafel mai amec zabi almi," began to shout the savage mouth, that sweeter strain would not befit. And my Guide spake towards him: "Besotted soul, keep thee to thy horn, and spend thy breath on it, when wrath or other passion cometh on thee. Search on thy neck, and thou wilt find the baldrick, that holdeth it suspended, dull-witted soul; and see what girdeth thy bulky chest."

And then he said to me: "He is his own accuser; this is Nimrod, through whose vain device one tongue alone is not employed on earth. There let us leave him, nor waste our words: for every tongue is to him as his to others, incomprehensible to all."

We therefore journeyed onwards somewhat farther, turning to the left: and at the distance of a crossbow-shot we found the other, fiercer and huger far. What may have been the master-hand to bind him, I cannot tell; but he had his left arm pinioned in front of him, and his right behind him,

with a chain, that held him fettered close from the neck downwards, in such sort that it wound itself about his body where exposed, even to the fifth coil.

“This arrogant spirit,” said my Guide, “was fain to make trial of his strength against high Jove; and such is his reward. His name is Ephialtes; and he made his great essay, what time the giants smote the gods with fear. The arms he wielded once, are motionless for ever.”

And I said unto him: “If it might be, I should wish that mine eyes might look on the immeasurable Briareus.” Whereat he made reply: “Anteus, thou shalt see hard by, who speaketh, and is unfettered, and he will bear us to the lowest depth of evil. He whom thou dost desire to see, is yonder, further far; and he is bound, and fashioned even as this one is, save that he showeth more savage in his aspect.”

Never yet was earthquake of such exceeding violence, that it could shake a tower so rudely, as Ephialtes straightway shook himself. Then more than ever was I afraid of death; nor was aught needed for it more than terror, had I not seen the bands.

Then fared we further on, and reached Anteus, who rose above the fosse full five ells without the head. “O thou, that in the fateful vale, which gave to Scipio an heritage of glory when Hannibal and all his host turned them to flight, didst erewhile carry off a thousand lions as thy prey, and,

an thou hadst but joined the mighty combat of thy brothers, folk are still fain to think the sons of earth would have won the day: set us down—let it not prove distasteful to thee—where the frost bindeth up Cocytus. Force us not to go to Tityus or to Typhon; this one hath power to grant thee what ye yearn for here; wherefore bend thee down, nor set thy mouth awry. He hath the power to restore thee fame on earth; for he is living still, and looketh forward to many days, if it so be that Grace call him not to herself or ever his hour be come.”

So spake my Master, and he, in haste, reached forth his hands, and took my Guide—the hands whose mighty grasp Hercules had felt ere then. When Virgil felt himself caught up, he said to me: “Come hither, that I may take hold of thee.” And then he so contrived that he and I became one bundle. As from beneath its leaning side the Carisenda tower appeareth to the eye, what time a cloud is sailing over it, so that it stoopeth towards its coming; so seemed Anteus to me, as I stood lost in wonderment to see him bend, and then it was that I would fain have gladly gone some other way. But gently he set us down in the abyss, where Lucifer and Judas are consumed; nor ever paused he thus bowed down, but like a ship’s mast raised himself erect.

CANTO XXXII.



HAD I command of rhymes uncouth and harsh, as would befit the joyless gorge whereon the other ridges are all sustained, I would in fuller measure press out the essence of my fancy; but since I have them not, it is not without fear that I bring myself to tell of it. For, to portray in words the base of all the Universe is not a task to take up lightly, nor one for childhood's babbling tongue.* But may the Sisters aid my verse, who lent Amphion their assistance to wall up Thebes, so that my words may not come short of the reality.

O race accursed beyond all others, that have your dwelling in a place hard to describe in speech, better far it were had ye here been sheep or goats!

When we were down in the darksome pit, below the giant's feet, but deeper far, and I still gazed in wonder at the lofty walls, I heard myself addressed: "Take heed how thou goest; see that thou dost not dash thy foot against the heads of the jaded and miserable brothers." Whereat I

* Lit., "nor for a tongue that cries mamma and papa."

turned me round, and saw in front of me, and underneath my feet, a lake, which frost had made to wear the semblance of glass, and not of water. Never did the Danube in Austria form on its course in winter time so thick a covering, nor the Don away beneath the chilly sky, as there was here, so strong, that had Mount Tabernich or Pietrapana fallen upon it, it would not have so much as creaked about the edge. And as a frog squatteth to croak, his snout above the water, what time the peasant girl oft dreams of gleaning; even so, livid up to where the hues of shame are manifest, were the unhappy spirits in the ice, chattering with their teeth like storks. Each had his face turned downwards: and amongst them their mouths bore witness to the cold, their eyes to the sorrow at their hearts.

When I had looked about me for a space, I turned towards my feet, and two I saw crushed so close together, that they had the hairs of their heads entangled. "Tell me," I said, "ye who press so against each other's breasts, who are ye?" And they bent back their necks; and after that they had lifted up their faces towards me, their eyes, which up to then were only moist within, welled over at the lids, and the frost congealed the tears between them, and barred them up again. Never did clamp bind log to log more firmly: therefore, even as two goats, they butted one the other; so dire the wrath that overcame them.

And one who had lost both his ears through the

cold, with face still downwards, said : " Why dost thou glass thyself so much in us ? If it so be that thou hast wish to learn who are these twain, the valley, from out of which Bisenzio's stream descendeth, belonged to them and to their father Albert. Of one body were they born : and thou mayest search through all Caina, nor ever find a shade that more deserveth to be planted in the icy mass : not him whose breast and shadow too were pierced through at one blow by Arthur's hand : not Focaccia ; not this one here that impedeth me with his head so, that I can see no farther, who bore the name of Sassol Mascheroni : if thou art Tuscan-born, well canst thou gather now who he was. And that thou mayest not urge me to further speech, know that I was Camicion de' Pazzi, and I am waiting for Carlino to excuse me."

Then saw I a thousand faces made dog-like by the cold ; whence shuddering comes upon me, and will ever come, when looking upon frozen pools. And while we went towards the centre, to which all weights are drawn together, and I was trembling under the gloom that never endeth, whether it was God's will, or fate, or chance, I know not ; but as I passed amidst the heads, I dashed my foot with violence against the face of one. He cried aloud to me complaining : " Why dost thou trample on me ? If thou comest not to make more bitter the vengeance of Mont' Aperti, why troublest thou me ?"

And I : " Master, wait now for me here, that by his aid I may rid me of a doubt : then mayest thou hurry me to thy heart's content."

My Guide paused ; and I said unto him, who still went on blaspheming in angry mood : " What art thou, that thus revilest others ?" " Nay rather, who art thou," he answered, " that goest through Antenora striking the jaws of others, so that, if thou wert living, it were too much ?"

" Living I am," was my reply, " and it may be welcome to thee, if it so be that thou dost look for fame, that I enrol thy name upon my notes." And he made answer to me : "'Tis for the contrary that I yearn. Up, and away from here, and cease to plague me ; for to little purpose dost thou flatter in this sunk plain."

Then took I hold of him by the back hair, and said : " Thou needs must name thy name, or never a hair will be left thee on thy head." Whereupon he answered : " Even though thou leavest me hairless, I shall not tell thee who I am ; nor make it known to thee, though thou shouldst fall upon my head a thousand times." By this I had his locks coiled in my hand, and from them I had torn more than one tuft, he barking, with eyes turned downwards ; when another cried aloud : " Bocca, what aileth thee ? Is rattling of thy jawbones not enough for thee, but thou must bark as well ? What devil layeth hand on thee ?"

" Now, cursed traitor," I said, " I do not want thy speech ; for I will bear away true tidings of

thee to thy shame." "Go thy way," he answered, "and tell whate'er it listeth thee; but if thou goest out from hence, hold not thy peace concerning him who just now had his tongue so glib. Here he mourneth the Frenchmen's silver. 'I saw,' it will be thine to say, 'him of Duera, where the sinners stand ill at ease.' If they should ask of thee who else was there, thou hast beside thee him of Beccheria, whose throat Florence laid open. Gianni del Soldanier is further on, I think, in company with Ganellone and Tribaldello, who opened Faenza's gates when all were sleeping."

We had already come away from him, when I beheld two in one crevice frozen together in such wise, that one of them made a covering for the other: and just as bread is devoured in starvation, even with such-like savagery did he that was uppermost drive his teeth into the other, where the brain adjoins the nape. Not otherwise did Tydeus gnaw the temples of Menalippus in wrathful indignation, than he the poll and other parts.

"O thou, that by token so brutal dost show thy hate against him whom thou devourest, tell me," I said, "the reason; on this condition, that, if thou complainest of him with a just complaint, I, knowing who ye are, and his transgression, may yet repay thee for it in the world above; an it so be that that wherewith I speak be not dried up."

CANTO XXXIII.



THAT sinner raised his mouth from the grim repast, wiping it in the hairs of the head he had devoured behind. Then he commenced: "Thou dost desire me to renew sorrow that knew not hope, that weigheth down my heart, even as I think thereon, or ever I tell of it. But if my words are to be the seed that will blossom into infamy for the traitor whom I gnaw, thou shalt behold me speak and weep at once. I know not who thou art, nor by what means thou hast come down here; but Florentine in truth thou seemest, when I hear thee speak. Thou must know that I was Count Ugolino, and this one here, Archbishop Ruggieri: and now will I tell thee why I am to him the neighbour that I am. No need is there to tell how through the working of his fell designs, the while I put my trust in him, I was entrapped, and then was done to death. And so, that which thou canst not have learnt, I mean, how cruel was my death, thou now shalt hear; and thou shalt know if he hath wronged me.

“A tiny chink in the narrow street, which upon my account beareth the name of *Famine*—and in which it needs must be that more be yet made fast—had already shown me through its opening many moons, when I slept the sleep of evil that rent for me the curtain of what was to be. This man appeared before me as lord and master, chasing the wolf and the wolf-cubs, on the hill which shutteth out the view of *Lucca* from *Pisa's* people. He had set *Gualandi* in front of him, attended by *Sismondi* and *Lanfranchi*, with dogs lean-ribbed and keen and trained. But short their run, when the father and his sons seemed to me to be weary, and I dreamed I saw their sides ripped open by sharp fangs. When I awoke or ever the dawn was come, I heard my boys, who were with me, crying in their sleep, and begging for bread. Stranger indeed to pity must thou be, if thou dost feel no sorrow now, thinking on what my heart foreboded: and if thou dost not weep, at what art thou wont to weep? And now they were awake, and the hour drew nigh at which our food used to be brought to us, and each was plunged in doubt by reason of his dream: and down below I heard the gate of the hateful tower being locked: wherefore I looked into the faces of my boys, speaking never a word. I wept not: so stony had my heart become: they wept; and my sweet child *Anselmo* said: ‘Father, thou gazest so: what aileth thee?’ But never a tear I shed, nor answered all that day, nor the night following,

until another sun dawned on the world. When a faint ray of light stole into our miserable prison, and I beheld in their four faces the image of mine own, I bit my two hands for very anguish. And they, thinking I did it because I yearned for food, straightway stood up, and said: 'Father, it will be pain far less to us, if thou wilt eat of us: thou didst clothe us in the raiment of this unhappy flesh, and do thou strip it off.' Then did I quiet myself, that I might not make them sadder. That day we all were silent, and the next. Ah! stony-bosomed earth, wherefore didst thou not open? When we had reached the fourth day, Gaddo flung himself full length before my feet, saying: 'My Father, why dost thou refuse to help me?' And at my feet he died: and as thou seest me before thee, so, one by one, I saw the three drop down before mine eyes, between the fifth day and the sixth; whereupon I betook me, with eyes already sightless, to groping over each of them: and for three days I called them by their names, when they were dead: then hunger proved more powerful than grief."

When he spake these words, with eyes askance again he fell upon the wretched head with his teeth, which in their strength were driven to the bone, as though they had been a dog's.

Ah, Pisa! stumbling-block to them that dwell in the fair land where *sì* is lisped; since they that are beside thee tarry in wreaking punishment upon thee, let Capraia and Gorgona leave their

place, and pile a barrier before the Arno's mouth, that it may choke beneath its waters every soul within thee. For though Count Ugolino had the name of having treacherously rent thy castles away from thee, thou hadst no right to put his sons to torture of such kind. Their tender years, new Thebes, made Ugucione and Brigata guiltless, and the other twain whose names my song hath erewhile told.

We passed along, to where, in its stern embrace, the frost enfoldeth another people, not turned to earth, but all bent backwards. Weeping itself there hindereth them from weeping; and the tears finding a barrier at the eyes, turn inward to make the agony of suffocation bitterer: for the first teardrops gather into a cluster, and, like vizors of crystal, they fill up all the hollow beneath the eyebrows. And although all power of feeling had through the cold been forced from out my face, as from deadened flesh, I fancied now I felt some breeze: wherefore I said: "Master, who causeth this to move? Is not all heat exhausted down here?" Whereupon he said to me: "Thou shalt be over-soon where thine eye will make answer to thee concerning it, seeing the cause which maketh the blast descend."

And one of the unhappy creatures in the icy crust cried out to us: "O souls, so dead to pity that the last place hath been allotted unto you, lift up for me the hardened veil upon my face, that I may rid me for a little while of the sorrow

that gathereth at my heart, or ever the tears are frozen up again." Wherefore I answered him: "If thou wouldst have me succour thee, say who thou art, and if I do not set thee free, may it be mine to go down to the lowest depth."

Then made he answer: "I am the Friar Alberigo; I am he of the fruits of the deadly garden, who here get dates for figs." "Ah!" I said to him, "art thou too dead?" And he made answer to me: "How my body fareth in the world above, I have no knowledge. This privilege this Ptolomæa hath, that many a time the soul doth fall down here or ever Atropos giveth the signal to depart. And that thou mayest with greater willingness remove the glassy tears from off my face, know that the moment that the soul is guilty of betrayal—as I was—the body is snatched from her control by a demon, who ever after ruleth it until its round of time is all accomplished. Headlong she sinketh into a pit fashioned as these are; and peradventure there is still seen on earth the body of the shade which wintereth behind me yonder. This thou needs must know, if thou art but now come down; it is Ser Branca d' Oria, and many a year hath passed since he was thus confined."


"I do believe," I said to him, "that thou art fooling me; for Branca d' Oria is not dead at all, and he doth eat, and drink, and sleep, and clothe himself with raiment."

"In the gorge of the Malebranche above," he

said, "where the clammy pitch is seething, Michael Zanche had not yet come, when yonder one left a devil in his place in his own body, and in a kinsman's too, who joined him in the doing of his treachery. But now put forth thy hand towards me; open mine eyes." And I did not open them for him; and it was courtesy to be ungracious to him.

Ah, ye of Genoa! men that dwell apart from all morality, filled full of every viciousness, how come ye not to be scattered from off the earth? For with the vilest spirit of Romagna, one such, your citizen, I found, whose soul, for what he wrought, is even now bathed in Cocytus, albeit his body seemeth still to be alive on earth.

CANTO XXXIV.

“HE banners of Hell's King come forth towards us, so look in front of thee,” my Master said, “if haply thou mayest see him.”

As, when a thick mist is blowing, or when our atmosphere is darkening into night, a mill turned by the wind appeareth from afar: such a structure at that moment did I seem to behold: and because of the blast I crouched behind my Guide; for other shelter was there none.

I was already come (and it is with fear I set it down in verse) to where the spirits were wholly covered, and showed through like to a straw in crystal. Some were in lying posture; some were erect; one on his head, another on his heels; another, like a bow, bending face to feet.

When we had made our way so far, that it pleased my Master to show me the monster that wore erewhile the beauteous countenance, he moved him forward from me, and made me halt, saying: “Lo Dis! and lo the place where it behoveth thee to arm thyself with courage.”

Ask me not, Reader, how numbed with cold and faint I then became—I write it not, for no words would suffice to tell it. I did not die, neither did I remain alive: bethink thee then, if it so be that thou hast even a spark of understanding, to what condition was I brought, bereft of both alike.

The imperial monarch of the realm of lamentation projected breast-high from out the ice; and more do I resemble a giant, than do giants even his arms. Now canst thou see how huge that whole must be to match a part so fashioned. If he was erewhile fair as he is hideous now, and lifted up his brows against his Maker, well may all tribulation in him have its beginning. Oh! what a mighty wonder did it seem to me, when I beheld three faces on his head! In front was one, and it was scarlet: of the other two that were united to the first above the midmost point between his shoulders, and came together at the crown of his head, that on the right appeared to me to be betwixt white and yellow; that on the left was such to look upon, as they that come from where the Nile falleth in cataracts.* From under each there stretched forth two great pinions, of a size to suit so huge a winged thing; sea-sails I never saw so large. Feathers they had none, but they

* Compare Cicero, "De Republica," vi. 18, "Sicut ubi Nilus ad illa, quae Catadupa nominantur, praecipitat ex altissimis montibus."

There are other passages in the "Comedy" which show that Dante was familiar with that portion of the "De Republica" known as the "Dream of Scipio."

were fashioned like a bat's; and these he flapped so violently, that from them there went forth three winds, wherewith Cocytus was wholly turned to ice. From six eyes wept he, and down three chins trickled the tears and bloody foam. In every mouth he crushed a sinner with his teeth, as it were in a masher; so that he thus kept three of them in agony. To him who was in front, the gnawing was as naught, compared with the mangling, for now and then his back was left entirely peeled of skin.

"The soul up there, that endureth mightier torture," my Master said, "is Judas Iscariot, that hath his head within and plieeth his legs without. Of the other twain, whose heads are down, Brutus is he that hangeth from the swarthy jowl: behold how he is writhing, and uttereth never a word. The other one is Cassius, he that seemeth so puissant of limb. But night is coming up again: and it is now time to go; for we have seen the whole."

As it liked him, I clasped him round the neck; and he took note of time and place, and when the wings were opened wide enough, he clung fast to the shaggy flanks. From shag to shag then made he his way downward, between the matted hair and the ice-crusted walls. When we were come to where the *thigh turneth just above the swelling

* Compare Homer, Iliad v. 305, *κατ' ἰσχίον ἔνθα τε μηρός Ἴσχιον ἐνοστέρεται.*

of the hips, my Guide, with labour and solicitude, brought his head round to where he had his feet, and laid hold on the hair, as one that climbeth, so that I fancied we were turning again towards Hell: "Cling close," my Master said, panting like one sore spent, "for by such steps as these we needs must make our way from evil so extreme." Then passed he out by the cleft of a rock, and set me sitting on the edge; then towards me turned his cautious footsteps.

I lifted up mine eyes, and thought to look on Lucifer as I had left him, and saw him with his legs held high in air. And if in such a moment I was spent with toiling, let those dull-witted mortals judge, who cannot comprehend what was the point which I had passed.

"Rise up," my Master said, "upon thy feet: the way is long, and the road is beset with difficulty; the sun, too, is returning towards the middle tierce."

No palace chamber was the place where we had come, but a dungeon of nature's making, with rugged floor, and lacking light.

"Master, or ever I betake me from the abyss," I said when I was standing, "speak with me a little to rid me of misapprehension. Where is the ice? And he yonder, how cometh he to be set thus upside down? And how is it that the sun in such short space hath accomplished his journey from eve to morning?"

And he made answer to me : "Thou dreamest that thou art still beyond the central point, where I laid hold upon the hair of the foul worm that boreth through the world. Thou wast beyond it only what time I was descending. When I turned me round, thou didst o'erpass the spot to which from every quarter weights are drawn : and now thou art beneath the hemisphere which is over against that which spreadeth its canopy above the great dry land, beneath whose topmost point was done to death the Man who was born and lived unknowing sin. Thou hast thy feet upon the smallest sphere, the same which formeth the other face of Judas' circle. Here it is morn, when it is evening yonder : and he that made a ladder for us with his hair, is fixed even as he was before. Here fell he down from Heaven : and the earth which here was erewhile prominent, cloaked itself with the sea in dread of him, and made its way unto our hemisphere : and peradventure to escape from him, the land which is apparent on our side left here a hollow space, and rose aloft. Deep down there is a place, as far removed from Beelzebub as the grave-like chasm doth extend, unknown by sight, but only by the streamlet's sound that descendeth there, through the stony mouth which it hath worn in the windings of its gently sloping course."

My Guide and I went in by that darksome way that we might reach the world of light again ;

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and unconcerned for any thought of rest, we went aloft, he first and I behind, so high that, through a rounded chink, I could behold the beauteous gems which Heaven weareth; and thence came we forth to look once more upon the stars.

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